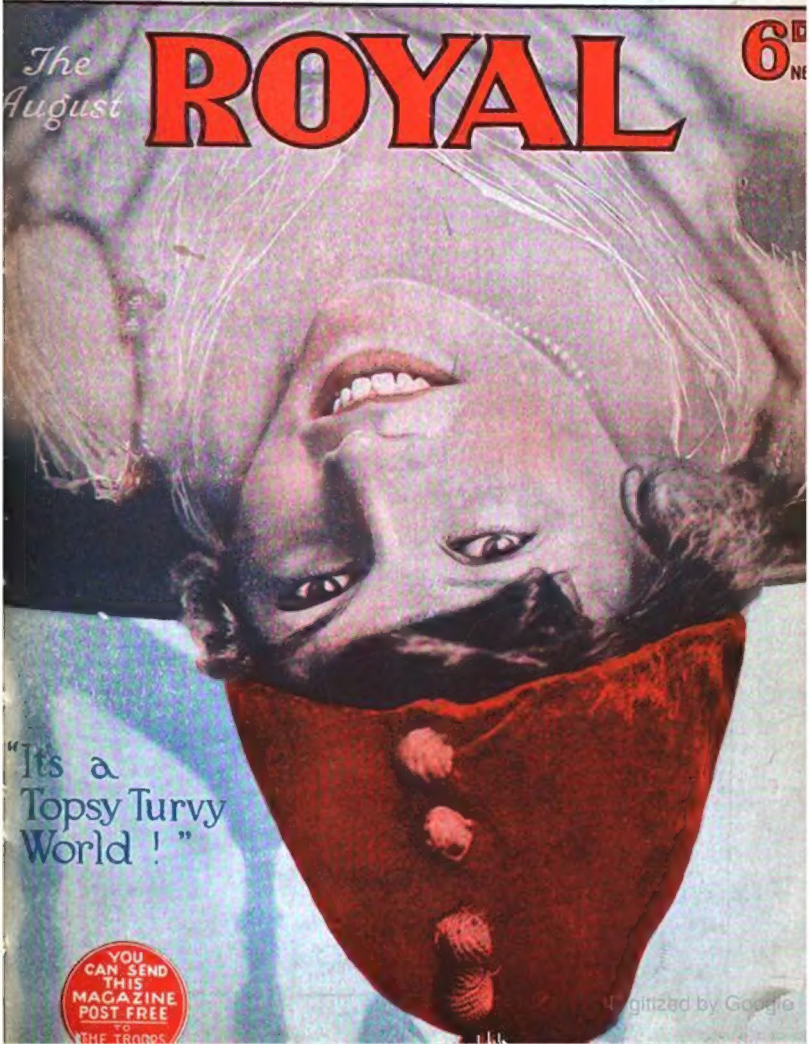
Contributions by

Joyce Barbour, A. M. Burrage, Gerard Fiennes, Wm. Le Queux, Booth Tarkington, Edgar Wallace, etc.



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NEXT TO A GOOD 'SCRAP' THERE IS NOTHING TOMMY ENJOYS SO MUCH AS A GOOD WASH WITH

WRIGHT'S COAL TAR SOAP

(The Soldiers' Soap)

4d. Per Tablet.

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Miss Joyce Barbour, although only fifteen, was one of the clever people who made *To-night's the Night* so delightful. On page 303 she describes how it feels to be the "baby" of the Gaiety company.

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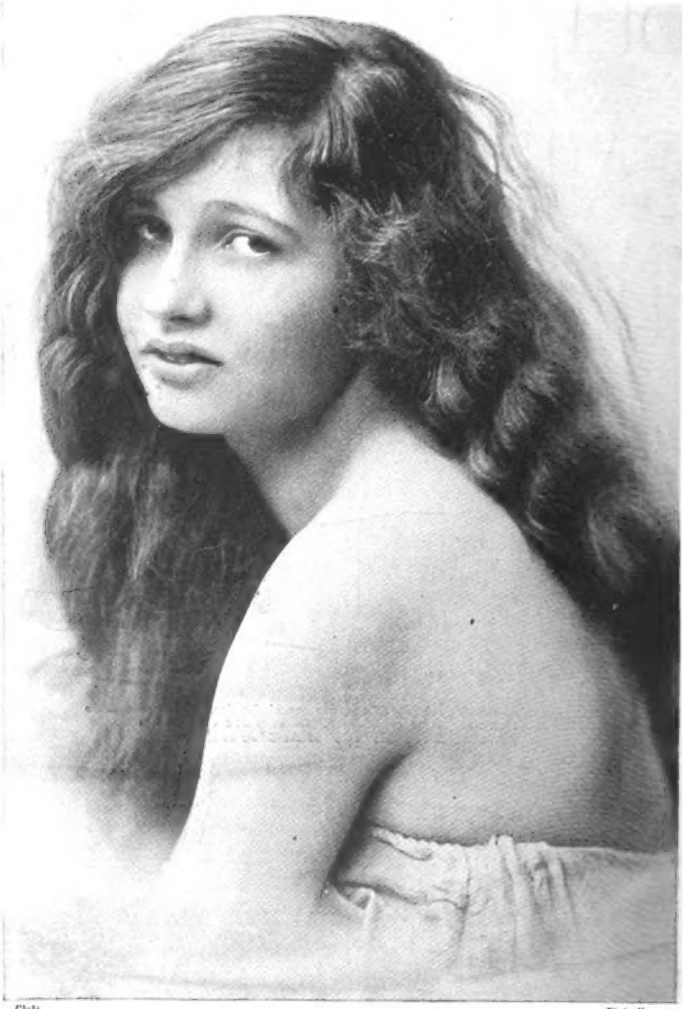

Photo Elvin Norma.

Miss Barbour's nickname has brought her lots of jolly letters from various admirers, and she confesses to being a wee bit spoilt by the Gaiety company in general.

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BEING The GAIETY "BABY"

By Joyce Barbour.

Miss Joyce Barbour is only fifteen years old, and the rest of the talented people at the Gaiety Theatre have christened her "The Baby." As the photographs, specially taken for the ROYAL by Elwin Neame, testify, she is a very charming infant. In the following pages she describes what it is like to be the Gaiety "Baby."—Ed. R. M.

Before she came to London the Gaiety "Baby" danced her way into the hearts of Birmingham audiences in pantomime.

Of course I'm not really a baby. I feel very grown-up, as a matter of fact, and the title of "baby" is simply a sort of pet name because of my few years. Actually I'm fifteen, very fond of the stage, and determined to get on.

But in some ways being the "baby" of the Gaiety isn't so bad. Perhaps it enables me to get a little spoilt—in the nice sense—by the rest of the company. And certainly it brings me all sorts of jolly letters "in print" from people who have heard

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Miss Barbour loves singing and dancing, is full of ambition and determined to get on——

——and as she has youth and beauty on her side she is bound to succeed.

about my nickname and write pleasant things to cheer me up, in case I need cheering up.

It's rather difficult to tell you anything about myself, because there isn't a great deal to tell, as you can imagine. They say "happy is the nation that has no history," and that's true. I'm happy because I've no history to speak of, and, as I'm always very happy, perhaps it *is* true.

However, I'll tell you the little bit I know about myself. My real home is in Birmingham, and it was there that I learnt to dance. Dancing is my great passion; I love it. And in Birmingham I appeared in a pantomime before I came to London. I danced in that pantomime, and it ran till Easter in spite of that fact, and thereby hangs a tale.

Easter, you know, is connected with eggs, and, being even younger then than I am now, many Easter eggs—chocolate ones—came my way. But the greatest surprise arrived one evening during the show. After my dance a big crate was handed up on to the stage.

When we opened the crate it contained a real live hen, and a whole lot of darling little chicks. Some officers had sent them to me for Easter, and I think it was a very novel Easter present, don't you?

Now I've progressed to a real London theatre, and the Gaiety at that. I feel I am getting on. Of course, you know, don't you, that London is the Mecca of everyone on the stage? I realise, naturally, that I've a great deal to learn, but everyone is so kind to me and anxious to help, that work is more like play than I could ever imagine it would be.

I think, too, that in war-time a London theatre is perhaps one of the most satisfactory places in which to work. You see, we always have crowds of sailors and soldiers in front. Directly they get leave they fly to the Gaiety, and they're all so jolly, and enjoy themselves so much, that it gives us a nice cheery feeling. We seem to be

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doing something, however small, towards helping on the war.

And now, what am I to reveal next? It is really a fearful thing to sit down and tell the story of one's life in cold ink. That kind of thing goes better in a musical comedy. It seems to me to need a song-cue—"and now I'll tell you all about when I was a little girl."

The conductor agitates the stick. The orchestra goes *umpah-para-umpah-para* over and over till I'm ready, and then, I suppose, I should go on something like this:

When I was a little girly,
Long black legs and hair so curly,
Life was such a jolly game,
No two days seemed quite the same;
Then I did not think it funny
Just to feed my cat and bunny,
Or, were I at lessons lacking,
P'raps to earn a gentle smacking—

Then, of course, the chorus would repeat the last two lines. I should

A London theatre is a most satisfactory place to work in during war-time, says Miss Barbour, for soldiers and sailors on leave flock to the Gaiety and they do enjoy themselves so much.

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bask again in the spot-light and trill the refrain:

That was many, many years ago.
Oh, it's sad that one should have to grow!
P'r'aps my childish sweethearts miss me—
Still, to-day they couldn't kiss me
As they used to kiss me many years ago!

Thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for the kind applause. It's very encouraging. Stimulated thereby, I will endeavour to proceed with my celebrated imitation of a young actress writing an article about herself.

I've always been kind to animals because I love them. It was my pet wish as a little thing to go on the stage as Joan of Arc mounted on a white horse and deliver a stirring speech before the walls of—I fear I've forgotten what walls, but wherever Joan of Arc did deliver a speech. Unfortunately, this ambition has not been realised so far. There are no white horses in the present piece, and if there were I'm afraid they wouldn't be for me to ride.

Dogs have a very warm corner in Miss Barbour's heart, and she specially loves bull-dogs and Pekingese.

Nevertheless, as it says in "Michigan," I've always possessed pets of some kind. Mind you, it's been in a calm, unexciting sort of way. No cat has ever awakened me by excited mewing in the stilly hours of darkness in order to save me from destruction in a burning house; neither has a gallant Newfoundland plunged into the stormy ocean to rescue me from a watery grave. These things always seem to happen to other people, not to me.

Neither have I kept eccentric pets, such as mongooses (or are they mongeese?), iguanas, Scandinavian mice, or other beasts of this unusual kind.

I love dogs, especially bull-dogs, while I have a very warm spot in my

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heart for Pekingese. At home, in Birmingham, we have a big brindle bull-dog named Peter. He is a perfect dear, and has the sweetest disposition in the world. It nearly broke my heart to part with him, but, of course, a bull-dog in a flat would be rather like a bull in a china shop, so I shall have to comfort myself with a Pekingese.

I haven't any very special hobbies, but I confess to a great love of motoring, and one of my ambitions is to learn to drive myself. It would be such fun to be "the man at the wheel," as it were.

Of course, I love going to the theatre, not only the Gaiety, where I'm playing, but to other theatres, where I can watch other people act, and incidentally pick up lots of useful hints from their performances. It may be a sort of 'busman's holiday, but it's very enjoyable as well as tremendously helpful.

Needlework is not my strong suit by any means, and the memory of a book-cover I once worked in silk haunts me still. I laboured at it for many weary months, and it is kept in the family archives as the one example of fancy work I ever did. Singing, dancing, and acting I enjoy beyond everything, and they keep me pretty busy, I can tell you.

Miss Barbour has no very special hobbies, but she is very keen on motoring, and cherishes a great desire to learn to drive a car herself.

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Donovan, the hero of these thrilling stories.

THE CORAL CROWN.

By William Le Queux.

When the Honourable Hugh Donovan, King's Foreign Service Messenger, undertook a mission he usually carried it through successfully. The following story describes how he outwitted the Austrian Secret Service and obtained valuable information for the British Government.

"But will she ever divulge the secret?" asked Lord Chiddingford, His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, a fine, grey-haired figure, as he stood with his back to the big fire-place in his heavily-furnished, old-world room in the Foreign Office in Downing Street. "Speaking quite frankly, Donovan, I doubt it," he added.

"Well—I don't," was the tall, clean-shaven cosmopolitan's reply. "I have private reasons for thinking that she might."

"Might!" echoed the great statesman. "Ah! That's just the point, Donovan—a mere chance. Are you really ready to take such a risk?"

"I've taken others," replied the good-looking King's Foreign Service Messenger with a smile. "Why not this? The information—if we could get it—would be of considerable interest to us, I presume?"

"Interest! Why it would be of the most vital importance," was the Cabinet Minister's prompt reply.

"Very well," said the Honourable Hugh. "With your permission I will make the attempt. I presume I have your authority to act entirely as I think fit?"

"Certainly. Do exactly as you wish," replied the grey-haired man upon whose shoulders rested the responsibility of Britain's foreign policy. "And I wish you, as before, every good fortune."

The Honourable Hugh strolled rather slowly and thoughtfully up the Haymarket until he reached the tube station at Piccadilly Circus, where he entered one of the telephone boxes and spoke to somebody in Italian. Then, walking to his chambers in Half Moon Street, he spent an hour over his atlas, mainly studying and marking distances upon the map of the Adriatic and the rugged Dalmatian coast with its many dotted islands.

At last he rang his bell, and his trusted valet appeared.

"Well, Bettinson? Any of our interesting friends about just now, do you think?"

"No, sir. I've watched, but have seen no suspicious person outside to-day."

"I shall go to Packington Street to-night, and shall not return for—well, perhaps a month," his master explained. Then he gave him a bulky blue envelope bearing a big red seal.

"Take this," he said, "and if I'm not back, or you don't hear news of me six

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weeks from to-day, open it, and act exactly as it directs. I suppose," he laughed, "that in these strenuous days one should be forearmed in case of failure. And, look here, Bettinson," he went on, "I'm not telling Miss Metcalfe, because I fear she might worry unduly. To-morrow, about this time, go to Draycott Place, see her, and tell her that I've had to leave suddenly with dispatches for Petrograd. Give her a message from me that I had to go so suddenly that I was unable to call. Make a nice, polite excuse—you know what to say."

"Very well, sir," replied the tall, gaunt, slightly lame man, who, after hesitating a moment, ventured to say: "But—where are you really going, sir?"

His eyes had fallen upon a tiny, thin glass tube containing half-a dozen small white pilules. He knew that his master usually carried upon him that mysterious little tube when his mission was fraught with more than usual danger. Indeed, the Honourable Hugh had once said to him meaningly: "If ever I'm caught I shall die by my own hand rather than be court-martialled and shot."

Truth to tell, those tiny pilules sealed in the little glass tube were of a poison which would cause death almost instantaneously.

In most of his master's trousers there was, beneath the left-hand outer seam, a small kind of pocket in which it could be slipped and carried when occasion demanded.

Sight of it had made the devoted servant curious.

"Well, Bettinson—the fact is that I haven't yet decided what I shall do. I know the goal I intend to reach, but I've got a confoundedly difficult problem before me—and at present I can't solve it."

After his man had left the room, Hugh took from a locked drawer in his writing-table a curious little object—a charm it appeared to be. It was exquisitely carved of pink coral, a papal crown, from which emerged a twisted excrescence tapering to a point about an inch long.

The base of the carved crown was mounted in gold with a golden ring in it, so that it could be attached to a watch-chain—a charm which those familiar with Italy know so well—a charm worn to guard its superstitious wearer against the dreaded Evil Eye. Indeed, in Naples and away south down to Villa San Giovanni and Sicily, almost every man wears such a charm or amulet, the same as the sacred scarab worn ever since the days of the Sixteenth Dynasty of Egypt.

Hugh turned the little amulet over in the palm of his hand. It was certainly a most artistic production, and as an artist he admired it. For a moment he held it against his own thin gold watch-chain, and a smile crossed his countenance. Then, after carefully examining the golden base of the crown, he placed it in the pocket of his waistcoat and drew a long breath.

That night, after a frugal dinner at White's, he looked in at Lady Shoincliffe's reception in Grosvenor Square, with the object, be it said, of getting a chat with Mabel Metcalfe, his well-beloved, the daughter of Sir Lionel Metcalfe, who had been British Ambassador to the German Court before the war.

The lovers met in the big drawing-room, and in a corner exchanged a few whispered confidences, as lovers will. The pretty girl whom he adored was in ignorance that her lover while gazing into her eyes, in his deep devotion to her, was wondering if he would be spared ever again to be at her side.

On leaving he hailed a passing taxi and drove at once down to Tulse Hill, where he alighted before a large detached house.

He was evidently expected, for a sinewy, well-dressed, and rather bald-headed man opened the door to him almost as soon as he had rung the bell, and greeted him enthusiastically, crying, in Italian:

"Ah, *caro mio!* Come in. I am so very glad. I was surprised to hear your voice on the telephone. It is really delightful to see you after all this time! The last occasion we met was in Parma. Do you recollect that night, eh? *Santa Medonna!* It seems an age ago. Doesn't it? And yet it is not long since."

"Well, my dear Bellini," exclaimed Donovan when he had entered a small, well-furnished room and the door had been closed, "I, too, am most delighted to see you. Can we talk here without fear of being overheard?"

"Yes," replied his keen-faced, dark-eyed host. "I have sent the servants to bed, and we are alone."

"*Benissimo!*" replied Donovan, and when both had lit cigarettes the man from Downing Street unfolded the object of his visit.

"Why, *amico mio*, of course!" was the Italian's prompt reply, after listening very attentively. "I will cable to Rome in the morning. You will find the Commendatore in Venice. He will come from Rome in order to meet you there."

"I shall go to the Vapore. It is purely Italian, and I have less chance of being recognised than if I stayed at the Grand, the Danieli, or any of the well-known hotels."

"Ah, my dear friend I see how well you

know our Venezia," laughed the Italian commissary of police. "One eats at the Vapore better than at any other hotel in the city—but it is quite unknown to the English, eh?"

Presently, after a further chat, Luigi Bellini left the room, and after an absence of nearly a quarter-of-an-hour returned, bearing in his hand a letter, which he withdrew from an orange-coloured envelope and showed to his friend.

The message, in a mysterious-looking cipher of numerals, was addressed to "The Illustrissimo Signor Commendatore Ugo Giannini—Venezia."

"But, my dear Signor Donovan, is not the risk very great, eh? Have you considered it all?" Bellini asked, with an expression of anxiety upon his rather remarkable countenance.

"Oh, yes," laughed the younger man. "But I hope to get through all right—yet only with your assistance can I hope to do it."

A week later a rather tall, ill-dressed man was seated in the unpretentious *trattoria* of the obscure little hotel, the Vapore, near the Merceria, in old-world Venice.

The place was filled by a merry-eyed crowd of Italians, eating their *minestrone* or their *stufatino*, each with his rush-covered flask of wine before him. The tall, rather shabby stranger, seated alone, was slowly eating his meal, for he had still an hour to pass away before the appointment which he had travelled from London to keep.

His appearance was, indeed, different to that of a week ago, when he had sat in his room in Half Moon Street, for he had a gaunt, rather hungry look, his face was pale, and there were dark rings around his eyes, which altered his expression considerably. His grey tweed suit was frayed at the cuffs, and there were ugly grease-spots on the coat and trousers. Across his waistcoat he wore a heavy foreign watch-chain of what was palpably an imitation of gold, and attached to its centre was the little amulet against the Evil Eye—the crown of coral.

Though he ate his meal with deliberation, yet he had become greatly interested in two men, apparently Italians, who were seated on the opposite side of the long, white-washed room wherein the red plush settees and little tables were ranged on either side. One was a grey-moustached fellow of about fifty-five, while the other was something of a dandy in his way, a dark, keen, narrow-eyed man aged about thirty, who wore a flashy ring upon his little finger.

It was the younger of the pair who had attracted Hugh's attention.

'Gad! I wonder if that's Philip Camacho?" he muttered to himself breathlessly. "If so, then he has certainly recognised me! That chap no doubt resembles him—and yet he was arrested in Toulon for espionage at the Arsenal two years ago and sentenced to ten years in a fortress. Curious, but the face is the same!"

Once or twice the eyes of the two men met blankly, yet Donovan could detect no sign of recognition. Nevertheless, the closer Donovan watched the more convinced did he become that the stranger was none other than the Spaniard, Camacho.

He knew, too, that if the fellow had recognised him, then his desperate mission must be fraught with far graver danger than he had anticipated. He was faced by a distinct peril.

The clock still showed that he had nearly half-an-hour to spare, therefore he lazily concluded his dinner, ordered coffee and a yellow *certosa*, and then, in the candle which the fat waiter brought to him, he lit a long Toscano cigar in the true Italian style, watching the pair furtively but very keenly.

Yes. There was now no doubt. The two men had bent forward to each other and were discussing him!

Donovan blew a cloud of cigar smoke from his lips, and presently, without betraying any undue haste, rose and left the restaurant, descending into the crowded street, so narrow that no cart could pass, and darkened because of the fear of Austrian aircraft which, it was feared, intended to bomb and destroy the national monuments. Indeed, bombs had already fallen in Ravenna, as well as in Venice and other places.

Dusk had deepened into night as the wandering Englishman crossed the great Piazza San Marco with its wonderful colonades, and skirting the beautiful Palace of the Doges, passed over the so-called Bridge of Sighs until at last on the Riva degli Schiavoni, where on his right lay the dark lagoon with but few lights shining upon the water, he turned suddenly into a dark entry and ascended a stone stairway.

There, on the first floor, a door was suddenly opened at his coming, and next moment he encountered a rather short, stout, black-bearded Italian, dressed neatly in a blue serge suit.

"Signor Donovan from London—eh?" asked the Italian as he greeted him. "I am very delighted at this opportunity of meeting you, Signore."

"And I, too, am also most delighted," Hugh declared. "I have here a message for you."

Then he handed the orange-coloured envelope to the Commendatore Ugo Giannini, the astute and world-famed chief of the Italian Secret Police, who had travelled from Rome to meet him.

Quickly the latter read the cypher message, and, not without surprise, remarked:

"I have already arranged for your journey, Signor Donovan. You will leave at one o'clock to-morrow morning. A gondola will be awaiting you at the steps just outside here at a quarter to one."

Hugh thanked him warmly, and then asked:

"Do you, Signor Commendatore, by any chance recollect the name of Philip Camacho?"

"Camacho? Camacho?" repeated the great detective. "Camacho—was there not a spy—a Spaniard, Philip Camacho?"

"Exactly." Then he explained how, in the restaurant of the Vapore, he had met him.

In a moment the Commendatore became active.

Crossing to the telephone, he was in a few moments in communication with Zacchetti, Chief of Police of Venice, whom he ordered to send men in plain clothes to detain and interrogate the man whose description Hugh had given.

"If he is actually Camacho, then he will not leave Italy for some years," said the Commendatore with a grin, as he replaced the telephone receiver. "It was proved at Toulon that he is in the employ of Austria!"

The two men sat down in the cosy little apartment which overlooked the dark lagoon—the sitting-room of one Vianello, Brigadier of the Venice Police—and there smoked and chatted until from the Police Bureau came a message that the suspect had left the Vapore. In reply to the great detective, Hugh explained the route he intended to travel, but would say nothing of the object of his secret mission. He always entertained a superstitious disinclination to speak of his plans.

Just before a quarter to one Donovan and his companion rose. The Commendatore went forth first in order to see that nobody was about, and then, on returning, conducted Donovan across the quay to where a gondola was awaiting them in the darkness.

The moment they stepped into the quaintly-shaped boat the two gondoliers began to propel the craft along in the direction of the naval port, until suddenly a low voice hailed them, and in the darkness they drew up beside a long black object which rose but slightly from the surface of the water, with a low turret in its centre.

It was a submarine.

The Commendatore grasped the Englishman's hand warmly, with a fervent "*Addio*," and next second the latter found himself descending the steel ladder into the interior of the small, cramped craft.

Below, a fair-bearded Italian lieutenant clicked his heels, and, saluting, showed him through into the officers' quarters—a small, half-circular, steel chamber where the hot air smelt of oil and cooking, and the electric light was dim because the dynamos were not running.

A sharp word of command sounded, and next moment the engines in the adjoining chamber began to whir, and the craft, with her deadly torpedoes in her tubes, moved swiftly out to sea, rolling heavily as she got under way.

After a brief chat in Italian with the two naval officers, smart, good-looking fellows, with the Stella d'Italia upon their uniforms, Donovan, at the invitation of the Commander, re-ascended into the conning-tower and gazed out upon the limitless expanse of moonlit sea.

As they drew rapidly out into the Adriatic, leaving behind them the four points of light which denoted the whereabouts of the Queen of the Adriatic—so well illuminated in peace time—a buffeting breeze sprang up, and the whole of the vessel soon became awash save for the conning-tower with its prismatic eye, the periscope.

In the far distance, to the east, a warship was signalling rapidly in tiny points of light. Donovan read the Morse, but saw that the message was in figure-code.

Suddenly the submarine upon which he stood sent forth a sharp beam of light across the black, rolling waters, the latter reflecting it for a mile or so. Then in a series of sharp "shorts" and "longs" it flashed a reply.

"The Admiral is asking if you are on board, Signore," explained the submarine-commander. "I expect he's a little anxious about us, because at dawn we shall have to dive to go through the mine-field."

"Who is your Admiral?" asked the man from Downing Street.

"The Marchese Visconti."

"Visconti!" echoed Hugh. "He knows me well! I've met him a dozen times in the Italian Embassy in Grosvenor Square. A splendid sailor, and greatly admired by our British Navy. In these days of war, however," added the Honourable Hugh, "we British pay no compliments. Does he know who it is who is with you?"

"I think not. He only knows that we have a confidential agent of the British Government on board."

"Then tell him my name, and give him my best compliments, will you?"

A quarter-of-an-hour later, when the Commander had reduced the message to code, the signal-light of the submarine opened out, and, receiving the acknowledgment of the Italian flagship, ticked out the message.

Ten minutes later, as they watched, there came answering signals, quick "shorts" and "longs."

"The Admiral sends you his heartiest greetings, and says he hopes to see you again at the Savoy—that is a restaurant, is it not?—when peace is declared," laughed the fair-bearded Commander at his side.

Afterwards, as the wind had increased and the waves were dashing over the conning-tower, the pair descended again into the close atmosphere, where the second officer awaited them in the small electrically-lit steel chamber, on the walls of which showed stout plates and bolts. At the end, upon the bulkhead, hung a framed portrait of King Victor Emmanuel.

Hugh threw himself on the narrow couch without undressing, and lay awake for a long time thinking and wondering. He thought mostly of Mabel. She would believe him to be carrying dispatches outside the danger zone, as he so often did. Yet he was, though within himself he laughed at danger, performing a most dangerous and desperate mission.

At last he dropped off to sleep, only to awake about two hours later with a curious feeling of pressure.

His companion, the second officer, woke also, and, looking across at him, remarked briefly:

"We've dived!"

Donovan gazed about him. The electric light had now grown far brighter, the hum of the engines had increased until the noise nearly broke the drum of his ear, now that they were travelling beneath the surface.

Again he dropped off to sleep, and when he awoke the vessel had slackened speed prior to rising to the surface to take bearings. Donovan, to whom the under-sea trip was full of novelty, stood beside the Commandant, gazing at the reflection of the periscope as they rapidly descended.

Of a sudden, light appeared upon the mirror, and next instant a view of blue sea and a great grey battleship close to them—a ship flying the Austrian flag, and followed by two others in line.

"*Dio!*" exclaimed the Commandant. "We're pretty near the enemy!"

Scarcely had he uttered the words when there came a blood-red flash and a puff of white smoke from the broadside of the battleship, followed by a column of water spouting high within a hundred yards of them.

"They've spotted us!" exclaimed the man from Downing Street. But ere he concluded his sentence the periscope had disappeared from the enemy's view, for they had dived again. An hour later they ventured again to rise, and, finding no vessel in the vicinity, steered south-east towards the Dalmatian coast. The day proved delightful, and the greater part of it Donovan spent in the conning-tower with the clear sea washing over the sloping exterior of the submarine.

In the brilliant sunset they sighted the steep green island of Lissa, the first glimpse of Austrian territory. Then, by rising continually and travelling mostly beneath the surface, they at last reached the long, low island of Calamotta without incident, and there they sank to the bottom to wait until midnight. Later they ran in the darkness into a quiet little cove, and rose beside a small wooden landing-stage. Here Donovan, having wished *au revoir* to his friends, stepped ashore in silence, carrying a small foreign-made hand-bag such as is used by commercial travellers, and wearing a grey plush Tyrolese hat.

The submarine moved quickly out to sea again, while the lonely Englishman went on his way carrying in his pocket a German passport perfectly in order, bearing his photograph, and showing him to be Hans Hirsch, native of Frieburg, a jeweller's traveller in the employ of Klein & Rosenberg, of Chemnitz, in Saxony.

The first flush of dawn was spreading as, striking the road, he crossed the hill among the cherry trees in full blossom, and went into the silent old-world Venetian city of Ragusa, with its red walls descending sheer into the waters, and where the entrance through the great fortification was so narrow that vehicular traffic cannot pass into its streets. Of an old peasant he asked his way to Gravosa, the modern town, and then, crossing the second hill, found himself presently at the railway station, the head of the wonderful line which winds from the Adriatic away over the great mountains, through rugged Herzegovina and Bosnia, and across the great plains of Slavonia, Buda-Pest, and then to Central Europe.

Challenged by the sentry, Hans Hirsch produced his passport, which was found satisfactory, after which he bought a ticket for Gradiska, one of the larger towns in Slavonia, and, entering the train, was soon slowly ascending the mountains, the panorama of grey rocks and blue sea changing at every turn.

Forty-eight hours later Hans Hirsch, instead of going on to Gradiska, descended a small wayside station called Verpolje, in Slavonia, and, hiring a rickety carriage at the inn, removed the stains of travel, and drove for seven miles up a green, winding valley to a great old castle, the historic castle of Djakovo, perched upon the edge of a great rugged limestone cliff.

As the shaggy horses clattered into its ancient courtyard, where the armorial bearings carved in stone showed over the entrance archway, wherein still hung the old portcullis of mediæval days, a tall man in the usual livery of the Austrian janitor came forth.

"I wish to see the Countess," Hans said in German. "I do not wish to reveal my name, but I am a friend."

"I fear it is impossible if you will not give your name," answered the confidential servant gruffly.

"Take this to her," he said, removing the crown of coral from his watch-chain. "I will stand out here in the courtyard. The Countess can see me from her window, and will recognise me."

Donovan well knew that by his visit she might easily be seriously compromised.

The servant left, but after seven or eight minutes returned, and, without comment, conducted him along a great stone hall up a wide staircase with balustrade of grotesquely carved stone. The place was cold, grim, and cheerless, its interior pretty well the same as in the mediæval days when it was one of the strongholds of Slavonia.

Through a long, echoing corridor he went until at last a door was opened, and the traveller in cheap jewellery confronted a handsome, dark-haired, well-preserved woman of fifty or so, who greeted him in excellent English, so that her servant could not understand.

"Well, Mr. Donovan!" she exclaimed. "This is a real surprise! However did you manage to reach me here?"

"My dear Countess, I wanted to see you, so I took the risk and came. That's all. My passport says that I am Hans Hirsch, a jeweller's traveller from Chemnitz—remember the name, please, as there may be inquiries. One never knows in war-time."

The Countess closed the door and silently turned the key.

"Well?" she whispered quickly. "Why are you here? Is it not extremely dangerous for you——"

"And equally for you, Countess Eberhorst," he laughed. "But please do not let us anticipate misfortune."

"How dare you come here?" asked the woman angrily.

"I am on a secret mission," was Donovan's cool reply. "I want to ask you a serious question or two. And remember," he added firmly, facing her boldly, "I want neither evasion nor lies. I speak quite frankly because I see that you, as head of the Austrian Secret Service, no longer entertain your old friendship towards me. That is but natural, now that our respective countries are at war."

The Countess, one of the shrewdest and cleverest women in Europe, had been chief travelling agent of the Austrian Intelligence Department for some years, and in the pre-war days Hugh Donovan had often chatted and dined with her at smart hotels in the various capitals where she had idled with the two pretty girls, Lotte and Klara, who passed as her nieces, but who were clever and well-trained spies.

It was of those two pretty "nieces" Donovan began to inquire.

"Oh, Lotte is in America and Klara is in Berlin!" was the woman's hasty reply.

"H'm, your information is, I fear, not very accurate, Countess," replied her visitor. "I happen to know that both are in Paris at the present moment—in the Rue Lafayette."

The Countess started.

"You'll give them away—eh?"

"I'm not in the habit of betraying my friends," was his quiet reply. "I have come here, Countess, as a friend of yours—to render you a service in return for the one I ask of you."

She pointed to a silken easy-chair, and took one herself.

The salon, not large, was beautifully upholstered in pale blue, the walls being hung with panels of brocaded silk to match, and the domed ceiling painted with charming heads of cherubs in a blue sky.

After looking into her eyes for a few seconds he asked her frankly several questions concerning the secret intentions of the Austrian Government—questions which it would be injudicious to detail here.

In a moment the Countess Eberhorst grew furious and, springing to her feet, cried:

"I'll not hear another word!"

Donovan remained quite cool, however, answering:

"I'm really afraid, Countess, that you must—and, further, you must reply to my questions."

"Never!" she declared.

"I repeat what I say."

She became furious, asking how he dared to enter Austria, come to her so impudently, and expect to ascertain the truth—he, an enemy!

"Not enemy, Countess," declared Donovan. "Your friend—I repeat, your good friend!"

"Friend, *bah!* We are enemies, and as your enemy I shall now telephone to Houdek, the military commandant at Brod, and have you arrested. You know far too much, my dear Mr. Donovan," she added with sarcasm, as she sprang across to where stood the telephone instrument.

"Touch that at your peril!" cried Donovan, who in a second had sprung up, whipped out his revolver, and covered her. "If we may not be friends, then let us be enemies, and I will treat you as such, my dear Countess."

The woman's arms fell inertly at her side as she turned and faced him.

"Come," he said in a changed, persuasive voice. "Sit down again, please. Do not let us lose our tempers."

Countess Erna Eberhorst returned to her chair unwillingly, and then her visitor upbraided her for attempting such foolish action as informing the military commandant. "My visit here," he added, "is entirely in our mutual interests."

"How? You desire to know secrets which are those of my country."

"And you surely desire your son Rudolph to live?"

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that Rudolph, I happen to know, is at this moment residing in London, in a certain street at Hammersmith, as Jean Rossel, a Swiss hotel clerk to be exact."

"You—*you know that!*" gasped the clever, crafty woman. "Then you shall not leave Austria to betray my son!" and she again sprang towards the telephone.

Without rising from his chair, Donovan raised his weapon and said:

"I regret to present this to a lady, but, remember, madam, I am fighting for my life, as you are for your son's. A word from me, and he will be court-marshalled and shot as a spy."

"You yourself will be shot here before you can give information!"

"*Bien!* I may be shot, as you say, but if you touch that telephone, Rudolph will pay the same penalty!"

"How?"

"Because, before I departed from London, I left a sealed letter to be opened in case I did not return," was Donovan's quiet response. "If I do not return, that letter, which explains who Jean Rossel is, will be opened in Whitehall, and action promptly taken.

"You know far too much, my dear Mr. Donovan," she added with sarcasm, as she sprang across to where stood the telephone instrument.—

Now—ring up the military commandant at Brod, if you choose. I am here, in your castle, quite prepared for the risk!"

The woman looked at him strangely and hesitated for a few seconds. Then she returned to her seat with quick, uneven steps, her face pale, and her white hands trembling. She saw herself outwitted, for she knew Hugh Donovan to be a man of his word.

"You will allow Rudolph to get out of England, eh?" she asked hoarsely.

"I give you my word of honour, madame," Donovan answered, bowing with perfect politeness, as though there had been no angry words between them. "You declared yourself to be my enemy, therefore I am yours. If you give me truthfully the information I seek—*truthfully*, I repeat—then I shall see, personally, that your son Rudolph is afforded safe conduct into any neutral country he desires. On the other hand, I anticipate that there may be inquiries regarding myself, but I know that, for your own sake, you will keep my visit to you a profound secret."

A silence fell again between the chief spy of the Ballplatz and Donovan of Downing Street. Then the wily Countess, seeing that Hugh held all the honours in the game, replied honestly and truthfully to the various questions he put so carefully to her.

Presently, before Hugh rose to go, the handsome woman laughed as she gripped his hand, saying:

"Since the war, Mr. Donovan, I have often thought of you. Do you recollect those merry times we had at Nice, Florence, Aix, Dinard, and other places, and how kind you were always to Lotte and to Klara? They often speak of you now. You will say nothing of their hiding in Paris—will you? They are doing no harm, and furnish no reports, I assure you. Klara is engaged to my boy Rudolph. That is why I beg of you to remain silent. You sent me this," she said, holding in the palm of her hand the little coral crown. "Do you remember that it was in Naples where I gave it to you?"

"Madame," replied Hugh fervently, "I have given you my word of honour as an Englishman."

"Yes. And I know, my dear Mr. Donovan, you will never break it," was the Countess' reply. "My only concern is for your safety, that you may return and save my boy."

"If I do not get back to London that letter will be opened. You can assist me. Place your own signature upon my passport and stamp it, informing any inquisitive official that I am a secret agent of the Ballplatz," he urged.

Instantly she adopted the suggestion, and within a quarter-of-an-hour Donovan had left the great old castle behind, and was on his way back to Verpolje.

An hour later the telephone rang in the Countess' blue upholstered

"Touch that at your peril!" cried Donovan, who in a second had sprung up, whipped out his revolver, and covered her.

room, and she found herself talking with the Intelligence Department at the Ballplatz, in Vienna.

The high official who spoke informed her that, according to a report just to hand from the spy Camacho, in Venice, an agent of the British Government named Hugh Donovan had left Italy on board a submarine for the Adriatic coast, and had probably landed.

The Countess held her breath. Then, recovering herself, she replied:

"I knew the man Donovan before the war, but I think our good Camacho is mistaken, because I heard, only a few days ago, that he is in America."

"Then you don't think it worth while to circulate his description?" asked the voice.

"No. Camacho has, I fear, been misinformed, and our police have surely enough work in these times?"

Meanwhile, the shabbily-dressed traveller, quite unconscious that Camacho had betrayed him, arrived at the railway station and purchased a ticket for Belgrade in order to mislead any who might follow. Instead, he went in the opposite direction, and at the great bare station of Brod, the name of which was written up both in Austrian and Hungarian, he bought a second ticket for Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia, to which he travelled, remaining there for several days in pretence of taking orders for jewellery.

Here, however, he narrowly escaped detection by accidently betraying, in a restaurant, a knowledge of English. Since the assassination of the Austrian Crown Prince the police of that delightfully picturesque town, with its Eastern bazaar, its mosques and minarets, had been very active. Hence it was not surprising that he should find himself marched to the bureau of police and closely questioned by a bushy-whiskered military officer.

The Intelligence Bureau in Vienna had, unfortunately, not taken the Countess' advice, and, Donovan's description having been circulated by telegraph, the officer actually had it before him. In consequence, his interrogation was very thorough and searching.

Hugh's perfect German saved him.

Assuming an attitude of injured innocence that he, Hans Hirsch, jeweller's traveller and secret agent of Austria, should be taken as a British spy, he laughed heartily at the suggestion. Indeed, so well did he play the part, that the Austrian Colonel at last handed him back his passport and bag of cheap jewellery, and told him he was free.

As Hugh was leaving the Bureau of Police he ground his teeth. Was it possible that the Countess had actually betrayed him? If so, then her son Rudolph would pay the penalty on his return to London.

For a second he hesitated upon the threshold. An idea had suddenly crossed his mind how to test the Countess' loyalty.

Returning to the officer who examined him, he said:

"I have a favour to ask, Colonel. I wish to travel south to Ragusa, and as this description of an Englishman is so near my own, I may again have unpleasant experiences. Will you do me the favour to telephone to the Countess Eberhorst, at Djakovo, and inquire about me? Upon her report I beg you to give me a passport to Gravosa."

The officer grumbled a little, but Hans Hirsch pointed out that, as secret agent of the Imperial Government of Austria-Hungary, he was surely entitled to consideration.

This convinced the Colonel, who rang up the Countess, and, having received a reassuring message, viséd the passport to the coast.

Three days later, at midnight, Hugh stood upon the little wooden landing-stage in that narrow, secluded cove beyond Ragusa.

From afar came the sound of a church bell, by which he knew that the hour had struck. Taking a small electric lamp from his pocket he made three short flashes.

A moment later came an answering signal from the sea, and within ten minutes he found himself being warmly welcomed on board the same submarine vessel in which he had crossed the Adriatic.

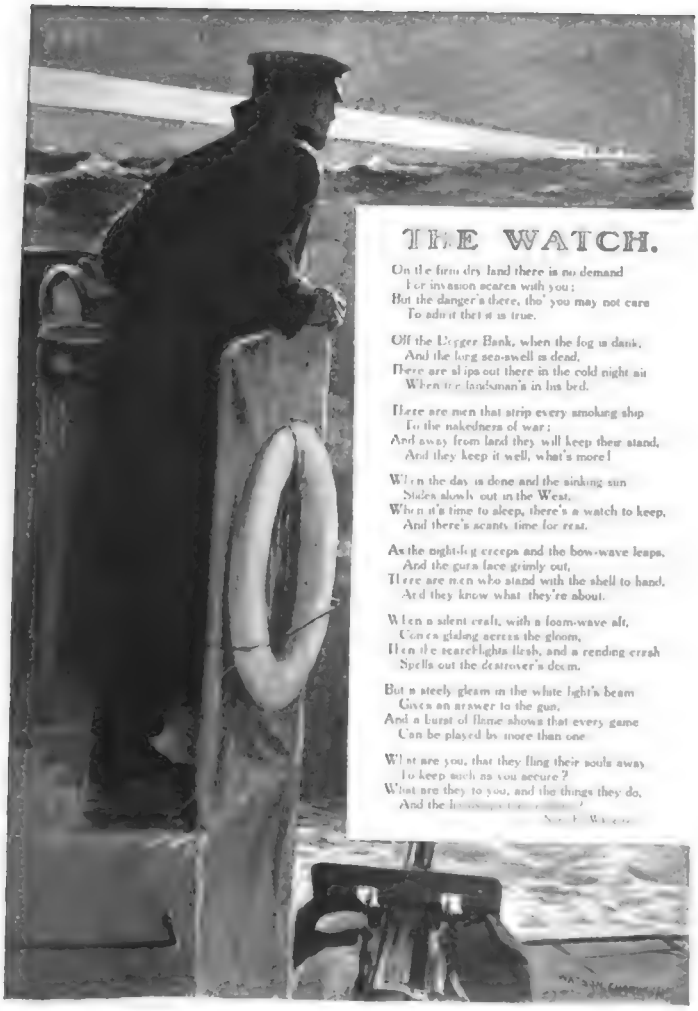
Nine days afterwards, just before noon, the Honourable Hugh, immaculately dressed, was seated in the Chief's private room in Downing Street, relating the all-important facts that had been told to him by the Countess Eberhorst.

The Earl sat back in his chair, his hands clasped, listening attentively to the clear report of certain intentions of the Austrian Government. Then, when he had finished, the Foreign Minister held out his thin, bony hand in hearty congratulation, saying:

"What you have ascertained will be of the very greatest service to us, Donovan. It confirms my expectations exactly, and knowledge of it means yet one more step towards our victory. For this service you, indeed, deserve the country's deepest thanks. I will see that after the war you receive your just reward."

That same night at half-past eleven Monsieur Jean Rossel left Gravesend, *en route* for Vienna, and he is not likely to be seen again on British soil.

(Next month "Donovan of Downing Street" carries out yet another dangerous and important mission.)



THE WATCH.

On the firm dry land there is no demand
For invasion scares with you;
But the danger's there, tho' you may not care
To admit that it is true.

Off the Dogger Bank, when the fog is dank,
And the long sea-swell is dead,
There are slips out there in the cold night air
When the landsman's in his bed.

There are men that strip every smoking ship
To the nakedness of war;
And away from land they will keep their stand,
And they keep it well, what's more!

When the day is done and the sinking sun
Slides slowly out in the West,
When it's time to sleep, there's a watch to keep,
And there's scanty time for rest.

As the night-fog creeps and the bow-wave leaps,
And the guns face grimly out,
There are men who stand with the shell to hand,
And they know what they're about.

When a silent craft, with a foam-wave aft,
Comes gliding across the gloom,
Then the searchlights flash, and a rending crash
Spells out the destroyer's doom.

But a steely gleam in the white light's beam
Gives an answer to the gun,
And a burst of flame shows that every game
Can be played by more than one.

What are you, that they fling their souls away
To keep such as you secure?
What are they to you, and the things they do,
And the [illegible]

THE SHUFFLE

By A. M. Burrage.

"Revenge, at first though sweet,
Bitter ere long, back on itself recoils."

I.

Lance-Corporal Richard Fullerton to William Edge Strover.

Authors' Rifles Headquarters,
Earl's Road,
Bloomsbury.
May 23rd, 1915.

Dear Old Strove,

Haven't had a line from you for donkey's years, and have been longing for news. I suppose the cricket eleven is rotten this year, so many fellows leaving early on account of the war. The house side ought to be pretty useful, though, with you and Baines still left. When are you going to join the Army, you slacker?

It's funny to look back on the old days at school. I feel as if I have left about six years instead of six months. About time my commission came along, but my O.C. hinted to me the other day that the older men stood the best chance of being gazetted first. All rot to pretend that a chap of eighteen isn't old enough to be a sub.

However, they've given me a stripe and sent me back to headquarters to train recruits. They are a hairy set of wash-outs, too! It 'ud do your heart good to hear me curse 'em on parade.

By the way, I see there's a chap named Belliers on the roll-call who's joining my squad to-morrow. Wonder if he's any relation to our Belliers? Heaven help him if he is! I haven't forgiven old Belliers for giving me that thousand lines and being so beastly funny over my essays. I'd love to have him under me for a bit. Wouldn't I put him through it!

Well, cheer-oh, Strove, old thing. Remember me to all the bugs.

Ever thine,
Dick.

II.

Private Arthur Belliers to his fiancée, *Miss Doris King.*

Authors' Rifles Headquarters,
May 24th, 1915.

Dearest,

I have just finished my first day's soldiering, and hasten to tell you all about it. I will begin by admitting that I wish I had taken your advice and joined the other Officers' Training Corps—the Law Courts—instead of the Authors', and that for a very painful reason.

Of course, I have not been in the Army long enough to say whether I shall like it or not, but I am afraid some very painful times are lying ahead of me. In any case, a man of thirty-five is a little old to begin an entirely new life, and as a schoolmaster I am too used to maintaining discipline to feel inclined to submit to it.

When I came on parade this morning for the first time imagine my feelings on discovering that the lance-corporal in charge of my squad was a Wryvern boy and a member

of one of the forms I took only a few months ago. His name is Fullerton, and I have probably mentioned him to you as one of the most troublesome boys I ever had to deal with. On more than one occasion I had to treat him with extreme severity.

Now our positions are exactly reversed. He is the master—with more power than ever I had as a master—and I the pupil. The whole thing is simply unthinkable. I feel like one of a pack of cards which have been shuffled into the wrong order.

The situation would be galling enough in any case, but I fear young Fullerton is likely to take advantage of the new turn of affairs. He kept on shouting at me all day, using epithets that were, to say the least, disrespectful. He is a mean, vengeful boy, and will make my life a misery if I am not careful.

I went up and spoke to him after dismissal, hoping to make friends. He said: "Now then, Belliers, what are you hanging about for? Take that smile off your face and stand at attention when you speak to me."

I then addressed him by name, but he cut me short. "You address me as corporal," he said, "unless you want to parade at five o'clock. And get those buttons clean by to-morrow morning—they're filthy. Also, when you're given the order to march, march. Don't waddle like a duck with bunions. Now you can buzz off."

So, dearest, you can't wonder if I am not very cheerful. I hardly dare think of the purgatory I shall have to go through. I hope to Heaven I shall get my commission soon, and so escape from the anomalous position into which I have been thrust. It is only because of our love for each other that, etc., etc.

ARTHUR.

III.

William Edge Strover to Lance-Corporal Richard Fullerton.

Rev. A. L. Sankey's House,
Wryvern School,
Wryvern.
May 25th, 1915.

DEAR OLD DICK,

Thanks awfully for your letter and postcard. Oh joy! Oh bliss! Oh rapture! Have you really got Belliers under you, or were you pulling my leg? If it's true, let him have it as hot as you can. Remember what we had to put up with, and give him Hades.

The news has gone all through the school, and the chaps can hardly hold themselves. You'll get about two hundred letters. Everybody who ever had a grudge against Belliers is raking it up, and they all want you to drop on him and pay him out for them.

I then addressed him by name, but he cut me short. "You address me as corporal," he said, "unless you want to parade at five o'clock."

By the way, he swore I was eating during Algebra once when I wasn't, and the beast gave me two hundred lines for it. Catch him moving on parade and give him some extra drill for it, will you? And always look at his neck to see if he's washed it. He'll like that.

Well, I must ring off now. Got two of Horace's odes to swot up before to-morrow. You're a lucky dog to be in the Army. Cheer-oh!

Yours ever,
W. EDGE STROVER.

IV.

Miss Lettice Fullerton to Lance-Corporal Richard Fullerton.

Regent's Croft,
Silverlea,
Devon.
June 1st, 1915.

MY DEAR DICK,

I am very glad to hear that you have been made a lance-corporal, for you gave me the impression of not taking the Army seriously enough. However, it seems I have misjudged you, and I am sorry.

I am glad you have not yet been gazetted, and my dear old friend Colonel Thunderblood fully agrees with me that you are much too young for such a responsibility.

It must be very nice for you to have one of your old masters in your squad, and I was delighted to hear that, although he is under you, you treat him with the same respect as ever, and smooth his rough pathway for him. That is the right spirit, my dear Dick, and inclosed you will find a Bank of England note for five pounds to show my appreciation of your conduct. Foster that noble spirit, my dear boy, so that when I am called away I shall know that my land and money are passing to one worthy to receive them.

Your loving aunt,
LETTICE.

V.

Private Arthur Belliers to Miss Doris King.

Authors' Rifles Headquarters.
June 10th, 1915.

DARLING,

Only a very brief line, for what with having to parade as a defaulter every night and write up a lot of lectures, I have hardly a moment to myself. And I daren't spend less than an hour on my buttons or that little beast Fullerton, who inspects us every day when an officer doesn't come round, tells me they're dirty and puts me down for an hour's extra drill.

Things have gone from bad to worse. From the start young Fullerton was unbearable, and now "unbearable" is much too mild a word. His language to me would shame a ship's cook. "A yellow, dog-faced washerwoman" is the mildest term he has ever used in addressing me. He makes me so nervous that I can't drill, and then he puts me down as a defaulter. Last week I lost my temper and answered him back, and for that I had to go up before the O.C. Detachment for a severe reprimand. If I am not gazetted very soon I shall go mad.

I suppose some people would laugh at me and talk about poetic justice. I admit I have been severe with my form, and particularly with Fullerton, but I do not think I have ever been unjust. And Fullerton is disgracefully unjust to me.

But let us forget him, dear, and talk about ourselves . . etc., etc.,

ARTHUR.

VI.

Lance-Corporal Fullerton to William Edge Strover.

Authors' Rifles Headquarters.
July 2nd, 1915.

DEAR OLD STROVE,

Thanks for your last. Glad the old House is going so strong. You'll easily lick Benson's, and the cup'll come back to its old home.

I've put "paid" to your account with Belliers. I've only got to drop on him on parade, and then Sergeant Crimps comes up and asks what's the matter and does the rest. He did three days "extra" at five o'clock for giving you those two hundred lines. (Charge: badge on cap still too high after repeated warnings.) At the present moment he's doing a sanitary fatigue for confiscating Johnston's watch. (Charge: dirty buckle on pack.) He's going a bit grey, but I'm making no end of a smart soldier of him.

I'm afraid, old chap, my commission's scrapped. My old fool of an aunt and her friend, Colonel Thunderblood, both think I'm too young to be a leader of men, and all that. I have to please the old girl, as she intends leaving me her pretty considerable store of boodle. Some ass told her I could transfer into something else, and she's written and asked me to do it. Rotten, isn't it?

I went up and saw the O.C. this morning and explained things to him, so, before long I expect I shall swop over into a fighting unit. Of course I shall lose my stripe when I go.

I daresay Belliers 'll get a commission soon. I hear he's got influence, so I daresay he'll manage to get out of going through the training school. Any more grudges against him? I shan't have very much more time.

Ever thine,
DICK.

I've put "paid" to your account with Belliers. . . . . At the present moment he's doing a sanitary fatigue for confiscating Johnston's watch.

VII.

Private Belliers to Miss Doris King.

Authors' Rifles Headquarters.
July 18th, 1915.

DARLING,

Thank God it has come at last. Colonel Mardell of the Sixth West Blankshires has asked for me, and our C.O. has signed my papers. I am now waiting to be gazetted. In a few days, I expect, I shall hear from the Adjutant, telling me to join the battalion. Another month of young Fullerton and I should have been dead.

ARTHUR.

VIII.

Lance-Corporal Fullerton to Miss Lettice Fullerton.

Authors' Rifles Headquarters.
July 18th, 1915.

MY DEAR AUNT LETTY,

Of course your wish is law to me, and after the receipt of your first letter on the subject I definitely renounced all thought of taking a commission.

I understand that I am to be transferred to the Sixth West Blankshires.

Now, auntie, you know I hate asking for money, but . . . etc., etc.

Always your affectionate nephew,

DICK.

IX.

Second-Lieutenant Belliers to Miss Doris King.

6th West Blankshires,
Culvery Camp,
Sussex.
August 10th, 1915.

DARLING,

The cards have been shuffled back into their right order. Young Fullerton has transferred into this battalion, and is in my platoon. After all I have suffered it seems too good to be true.

I shall try to be just, but I am only human

ARTHUR.

X.

Beginning of letter from Private (ex-Lance-Corporal) Fullerton of the Sixth West Blankshires to William Edge Strover.

D Company,
6th West Blankshires.
August 13th, 1915.

DEAR OLD STROVE,

Oh, ——I . . .

WOMAN THE WARRIOR.

Mr. Edgar Wallace, the author of the following striking article.

By Edgar Wallace.

Mr. Edgar Wallace, the creator of the immortal Nobby and author of that entertaining book entitled "Smithy and the Hun," here discusses the position of women workers after the war, and reassures those who consider woman's invasion of the labour market a menace to the men she has replaced.

Woman the warrior has taken her place in the ranks of the great industrial army which, at the moment of writing, is helping to win the war for England and her Allies.

Her arrival on the scene is a cause for misgiving. Men she has replaced are speculating upon the possibilities of the future, not realising that Britain is in the position of a great factory which has always been understaffed, *and that there are not sufficient men in the country for the adequate development of her industries.*

A Dearth of Men.

The after-the-war difficulty will not be, how shall we find work for men, but, how shall we get the men we require?

Woman has already supplied half the answer to that question. She has made it abundantly clear that she can take certain jobs and release men not only for fighting with rifle and bayonet, but with lathe and machine in the war which is to follow the war.

If modern man is puzzled as to woman's future place in industry, how much more would be the ancient philosophers, if you could transport them from the spaces of immortality and engage their minds in the problem which is presented by the war woman and her future. Euripides saw his ideal in one who "remained quiet within the home." Socrates would have set his face most resolutely against the modern war-worker, believing that her introduction into man's spheres would react to his disadvantage.

"Woman, once equal to man, becomes his superior," he said, and in the terms of equality he must have included her equality of opportunity.

Women After the War.

England asks, and asks in all seriousness, what is to be the position of woman when the war is ended? Will she retire gracefully into the oblivion from whence she came? Will the neat 'bus-conductresses, the messenger-girls, the women ticket-collectors and inspectors, the lift-girls, and the like—will these go back to whatever was their task before the exigencies of war brought them to fill man's place?

The answer is "No."

The returned men will come against Woman the Warrior—woman, who, obeying the unerring instinct which every mother-heart holds, the instinct, not of self-preservation, but race-preservation, will oppose the return of men to jobs which women can fill. Not necessarily the women who are at present employed in work which the majority regard as temporary, but the army of women who will march along the path which these pioneers have cut.

Let this be remembered: that nothing so rouses the scorn of womankind as the spectacle of men filling women's jobs. There never was a woman who respected a shop-walker or counter-clerk. There never was a woman who did not regard a male domestic with contempt. The only domestic servants of a household that the educated woman ever met on anything like human terms were the groom or the chauffeur—because they were doing men's work, and work which was too heavy for a woman to perform.

The Two Essentials.

Women require manliness in men. They demand the exhibition of strength or exceptional ingenuity. They have implanted in them the consciousness that life is a mental progression, and that mentality is, or should be, one of the most important weapons in man's equipment.

The woman comes to replace men who are either physically unfitted for manual labour, or were occupying positions which rendered it unnecessary for the job holders to employ their superior physical gifts. Those men, replaced by women, went into the Army or, in other words, went into physical training.

There is no reason why, at the end of the war, such men should revert to boy-jobs. There is no reason in the world why they should not be absorbed by the factories, which should be increased in number, and should be fully occupied in meeting the heavy demands consequent upon trade recovery after the war.

Wanted! A Manufacturing Army.

We need more than an army to fight—we shall need a great manufacturing army.

Germany exported to England alone enormous quantities of manufactured goods which will have to be made at home. She also exported these to Russia and to France—and we shall secure a portion of that trade.

A million pounds worth of motor chassis came from Germany—that million (or a greater part) will be spent in England. £300,000 extra will be paid in wages—2000 or 3000 men must be found additional to those who were being employed before the war in motor-car manufacture. Women will largely replace the men who go into the factories. £3,000,000 worth of chemicals; £700,000 worth of earthenware (the raw material came from Cornwall and Devon!); nearly £7,000,000 worth of soft goods, gloves, hosiery, lace, etc., came from Germany (here is employment for 20,000 or 30,000, mostly women); boots and shoes to the amount of £1,500,000; iron, steel, electrical goods, machinery, etc., £10,000,000 (20,000 to 30,000 extra workmen required).

How are we to obtain the skilled man labour to cope with the demand upon our industries which must inevitably follow the end of the war?

It must be drawn from those departments of industry which have hitherto attracted the unskilled labour.

New armies of mechanics mean new armies of clerks, messengers, and carriers. Our greatest problem will not be to oust woman, since woman, the warrior, is not to be ousted, but to persuade her to continue in the work which she is now performing.

The Problem Before Employés.

I have been at some pains to discover the feelings of the women themselves upon this very important subject, and I append a few typical cases, showing the considerable difficulties which employers of labour will experience when the war is over.

Let it be remembered that there are few skilled machinists or engineers at the Front. They are included in the two million now engaged in munition work. Let it be remembered, too, that their numbers must be considerably augmented, and that thousands of men who left boy-jobs will come back to men's work.

That is a point which I would very strongly emphasise. The lift-men, the messengers, the ticket-inspectors—who are amongst the poorest paid of workers—will find more lucrative employment elsewhere. The employer may be faced with the alternative of women or nothing. The present great army of women employed are merely the pioneers of women labour in unusual occupations. From what I have been able to gather, they themselves regard their work as purely temporary and for the duration of the war only, and the majority do not seriously consider the possibility of continuing in their present occupations.

H. B. before the war was a waitress in a tea shop. She is now a conductress. After the war she will marry her "boy," who is now serving in France with a heavy gun detachment. She is not greatly enamoured of her present job, save that it gives her a certain authority which is pleasing.

H. M. before the war was a "book-keeper"—a vague description which when worked out proved to be a cash-girl at a stationery shop. She is now working a Tube lift, and prefers the

work. She likes the authority she possesses, which is in contrast to her previous position. After the war she hopes to marry and "settle down." She has no young man in France, but harbours the faith that "Mr. Right" will one day float into her orbit.

K. V. before the war was a shorthand-typist (not a particularly good one, and probably only in the novice stage). She is now engaged in a munition shop, and "likes the life"—and the wages. She is married, and (during the war) her husband is in France. When he returns, she will not go out to business as her husband objects.

K. C., before the war a domestic servant (there are very few domestic servants to be met with, but this is probably due to the fact that the girls will not admit that occupation), now employed as conductress. Likes the work, but "too hard for a woman." Regards her profession as essentially a war-time product. After or during the war will marry a man now engaged in munition work.

S. J., before the war of no occupation, lived with her parents, now a conductress. Educated at Cheltenham. Advanced views on woman's place in the world. Young, and has no desire to continue working after the war. Gives her wages to a benevolent fund (for 'busmen).

M. A. O., before the war of no occupation. Soldier's widow. Has two children. Now employed as messenger. Likes the work, and especially cycling. Says she wishes to continue, "as it is only boys' work." Very intelligent girl, and holds the view that all boys should be compelled to serve an apprenticeship at some trade or other, but only for three years. After that, apprenticeship should be voluntary. This would give women such work as messengers, lift-boys, bell-boys, and booking-clerks do.

R.C., before the war a shorthand-typist and secretary, now in a railway ticket-office. She likes the work, but finds it very exacting. After the war she will marry.

I have conducted inquiries into some 150 cases, and these are the facts that stand out:

1. The majority of women questioned have as the goal of their ambitions, marriage and a home. Very few, indeed, seriously consider their future in relation to independent employment.

2. Those who like their jobs are most pleased by the authority which the uniform or their position give to them. They have never before had the right to address such peremptory instructions as "Step lively!" or "Show your ticket!" to mere men—indeed, the majority are meeting man in his oppressed state for the first time, and find the experience both novel and delightful.

3. They mostly agree that the men with whom they work are suspicious and resentful of this intrusion. They all agree that the great public, whom they are meeting for the first time, are considerate and polite.

It will be seen that few of these women regard their positions in the light of a permanency, and that is as it should be. The type of mind that looks upon a job which requires little skill and practically no strength as enjoying any permanence, is a singularly weak one, and is a source of weakness to the nation. The unskilled labour market should be stirred up at frequent intervals, and if women supplied the majority of workers in that market the stirring up would be more or less automatic.

The Feminine Point of View.

The minds of the majority of women are fixed upon marriage, settlement, and domestic duties. Not two per cent. of the young women who go to work regard their career as permanent. It is rather the interregnum between school and marriage, an awkward interregnum, where their boundless energy, their youth, and their natural desire for a certain financial independence urge them to energetic action.

Roughly speaking, the average working life of a woman—and by working life I mean that period in which she is employed outside of her home—is about eight years. The average working life of a man is about thirty. For this reason alone there will always be a considerable shortage of woman labour, if employers decide, as they must decide, in retaining women in those posts for which the war has proved they are best fitted.

The decision, as it happens, does not rest entirely with employers. Woman herself has marked down the billets she can hold as creditably and as adequately as her male competitor. It is all to the good that she has arrived at such a decision, for without her we might find ourselves faced with the alternative of importing labour or restricting our output of manufactures.

"RED TABS"

By Dorothy Rose.

"The round little flower of a face that exults in the sunshine of shadowless days."

"I've made up my mind. I'm going to do dairy work, and it's not a bit of good your trying to talk me out of it!"

Dilys Crane flung the words across the tea-table, defiance in every line of her slim, erect figure and vivid little face.

The tall Staff-Officer met the gaze of her mutinous grey eyes with disapproval in his own dissatisfied blue ones. He was good-looking in a correct, unimpassioned way, with an immaculate fair moustache and an indeterminate chin.

"There are plenty of other things you can do without descending to the level of a farm-hand," he returned, balancing his tea-cup with characteristic precision as he reached for the cake basket.

"That's just where you're wrong," said Dilys with the charming smile which, even more than her golden-brown hair and dimpled chin, made glad the hearts of men. "I tried Red Cross work, but the bandages were too much for me, and I never was any good at thimble drill. And now Mrs. Andrews—she's my old nurse, you know—writes from Little Hamlet to say they can't get girls for dairy work for love or money. So I'm off on Saturday. I can't ask Dad as he's in the States, but I know he wouldn't mind a bit."

Captain Stafford nodded non-committally. Joseph Crane, having made his money by a miraculous cough cure, had no false notions of pride, and Dilys had always been more or less a law unto herself.

"My wishes don't appear to count," he remarked stiffly, "but you must realise that it's going to be very awkward. I shall be at

Little Hamlet occasionally, keeping an eye on my place there, and——"

"A dairymaid *fiancée* isn't exactly to your taste," finished Dilys, her colour rising indignantly. "Oh, I see what it is—it's just stupid pride. You're afraid of what people will say—it isn't the thing for a pillar of the War Office to hold communion with a mere farm-hand."

Captain Stafford ignored this outburst.

"My dear Dilys," he said in his most official manner, "I must insist——"

"I think it must be your red tabs or the atmosphere of Whitehall that make you so pig-headed, Leonard," she observed critically. "Do you mean I must choose between you and the cows?"

Captain Stafford had no sense of humour, and he resented being bracketed with the cattle of the field. His sense of outraged dignity lent curtness to his tones as he replied:

"Something of the sort, I suppose."

"Then I choose the cows," returned Dilys, with unflattering decision.

Her red lips set in a firm line, her eyes flashed indignantly as she held out in the palm of her hand something that sparkled in the sunlight.

For a moment the Staff-Officer hesitated, reddening uncomfortably; then he picked up the ring, saluted stiffly, and strode from the room.

II.

She was milking a patient cow under the shadow of a hedge where honeysuckle and meadowsweet ran riot when Lieutenant Alan Courtney first espied her and conceived a violent desire for milk. She looked up, pushing back a strand of gleaming hair that had escaped from beneath her lilac sun-bonnet, as he approached. Her grey eyes held a sparkle of mischief in their depths as he proffered his request.

"If you'll come up to the house I'll get you the milk," she said demurely, picking up her pail and preparing to lead the way.

Lieutenant Courtney annexed the pail gallantly, with an appreciative glance at the trim lilac cotton frock from which Dilys' softly-rounded face, delicately tanned by the July sun, rose fresh as the wild roses that still lingered in the green hedges.

To Dilys' surprise he greeted Mrs. Andrews as an old friend, and, sitting on a green bench beneath the dairy window, disposed of milk and home-made cake in a manner worthy of the best traditions of the Army. Dilys found his laughing blue eyes and well-bred face very attractive; she liked the kink in his dark, close-cropped hair, and the squareness of his jaw. For five weeks she had been isolated from her own world, and her heart went out to this tall, khaki-clad youth with the two magic stars on his cuff.

"A real nice young gentleman," said the good dame when he had departed. "He's the only son of Colonel Courtney up at the Manor, a pleasant-spoken gentleman, but a rare proud one. The Courtneys are a very old family, and they do say the Colonel wants Mr. Alan to marry a title."

Dilys nodded absently as she tied on her sun-bonnet, and her soft grey eyes took on a wistful look. Joseph Crane's father had been a coach-builder, and her own father had started life in a chemist's shop; she wondered vaguely how Colonel Courtney would regard any friendship between his son and the daughter of the founder of Crane's Cough Cure.

Hawthorn Farm lay on the road from The Manor to the village, and Alan, with six weeks' sick furlough before him—the result of a bad shrapnel wound—found little difficulty in inventing excuses for calling a halt there. He developed a surprising fondness for milk and a positive genius for timing his visits just when Dilys was enjoying a substantial tea and a well-earned rest under the copper beech in the back garden, while the farmer and his wife consumed their meal in conventional comfort in the red-tiled kitchen.

It was over tea and home-made scones that Dilys confided to him her reason for turning dairymaid.

"I wanted to *do* something," she said, as she filled his cup for the third time. "It isn't the same giving money; I wanted to give service."

"Jolly sporting of you, I call it," responded Lieutenant Courtney, attacking the strawberry jam. "It's no joke giving up a silk-stocking existence, and getting up at six o'clock to interview the cows," at which approving comment Dilys flushed as pink as her linen gown.

She had known Lieutenant Courtney nearly three weeks when, Mrs. Andrews being extra busy, she offered to take the bi-weekly complement of eggs up to The Manor. She was walking briskly up the sun-flecked drive, admiring the peeps of green parkland that showed between the trees, when a big retriever bounded from behind a clump of rhododendrons and startled her into dropping her basket of eggs.

"Rover! Rover!" It was Alan's voice, and at that moment he appeared from between the bushes, a girl at his side. Even in her consternation Dilys found time to note

a certain languid prettiness of face and figure. She had ash-gold hair and rather pale-blue eyes; beside Dilys in her pink linen, her golden-brown hair gleaming beneath a shady Panama, her cheeks flushed with exercise, she looked colourless and almost insignificant.

"I say, I'm awfully sorry, Miss Crane." Alan's expression of dismay brought a smile to Dilys' lips as she stepped aside to avoid the yellow stream trickling gaily down the drive. "Every Jack one of them smashed!" he added as he picked up the empty basket.

"What a calamity!" Dilys tilted her dimpled chin defiantly as she caught the unfriendly glance of his companion. "I'd go back for more, but these are all we have. What will your cook do? She wanted them particularly."

"She'll have to do without 'em. I'll go up to the house with you and settle her," said Alan. "Eva, you'll wait for me, won't you? Oh! I say, I haven't introduced you. Miss Dilys Crane—Lady Eva Dorling. Miss Crane is doing her bit by acting dairymaid at Hawthorn Farm. Jolly sporting of her, isn't it?"

Lady Eva gave a disdainful shrug and prodded impatiently at the gravel with her white sunshade. "I suppose some people like rough work," she replied superciliously. "It's really too hot to stand here talking. Are you coming, Alan?"

"I'll catch you up." Alan's tone was almost curt; his blue eyes held the wrathful glint of which his platoon stood wholesomely in awe. "I must go and settle cook. You toddle on. I'll be after you in no time."

"You needn't trouble. I've no doubt I can find another escort," she retorted, "so pray don't hurry on my account."

"Righto! I won't!" replied Alan cheerily, and with an annoyed lift of her drooping shoulders Lady Eva walked slowly on, leaving Dilys and the young officer facing each other across the yellow ruins that had once been new-laid eggs.

"Almost as upset as the eggs, isn't she?" said Alan with a wicked grin as they walked up towards the big gabled house, whose latticed windows blinked sleepily in the afternoon sun. "Beats me why some girls are so touchy. Tell you what, Miss Crane, I'll go and make the peace with cook while you rest in the orchard."

He turned into a side path, and opened a wooden gate that gave on to a fairyland of waving green grass and trees crowded with reddening cherries.

When he had gone Dilys sat down on a fallen tree, and her face grew suddenly sober. "They do say that the Colonel wants Mr. Alan to marry a title"—those were Mrs. Andrews' words. Was Lady Eva the title? Dilys was the friendliest little soul imaginable, but Lady Eva's superior airs were unbearable. She roused herself to greet Lieutenant Courtney with a smile as he strode across the grass towards her.

"You look like a fallen apple blossom," he said, laying a brown finger on her pale pink sleeve. "I've fixed up cook all right, so I think I deserve a rest. Why not come up to the house and have some tea, Miss Crane? You must want some after your long walk."

Dilys shook her head. She had taken off her hat, and the sun glinted on her wavy hair till it looked like burnished gold. "I'd rather not," she said firmly. "You see, at present I'm a dairymaid, and I feel sure dairymaids are not received at The Manor."

The young lieutenant sat down beside her, reddening beneath his tan. "You mustn't mind Eva," he said apologetically. "She's a little snob, though I oughtn't to say so, since she is my *fiancée*."

"You're engaged to her, then?" Dilys' eyes were fixed on her trim brogues, absurdly small beside the tan boots of her muscular companion.

"Yes. Upon my soul, I don't know how it happened," was the astonishing reply. "You see, the Pater's been awfully keen ever since Eva's people took Meadowlands from him. They're a very old family, and have pots of money. Eva's the only child, so it will be hers one day. You see the idea?"

"Yes." Dilys propped her chin in her hands and regarded him gravely. "But I don't see why you gave in if—if you weren't in love with Lady Eva."

"It's so fatally easy to get engaged," pleaded Alan, "and Eva can be charming enough when she likes. But she isn't a bit sporting, else she wouldn't try to persuade me to take a Staff job instead of going back to France. The Pater could get me one, and she knows it, but that sort of work's for older men. Fact is, Eva's struck on red tabs—thinks it'd be gorgeous to float about with me in staff uniform and call for me at the War Office. I've told her I won't do it, but she still clings to the idea. I shall be quite fit by the time my leave's up, and my place is in the firing-line."

"That's the spirit I like," responded Dilys warmly. "She ought to be proud of you."

"I think Eva looks on me as a sort of superior Pekingese to be paraded before all and sundry, and once in the trenches I'm no good in that capacity. She's been more

insistent than ever lately, since a chap called Captain Stafford has been in the neighbourhood. He's a Staff Officer. Eva says red tabs look so *sweet* with dark hair. Heaven knows I don't want to look sweet!" concluded Alan, his square jaw set so grimly that Dilys laughed outright.

"I'm awfully sorry for you," she said, her sweet face a trifle clouded. Captain Stafford had consoled himself amazingly soon. "But you're in the right, and I know you'll stick to your guns. Now I must be off or the cows will be speaking their minds," and she sped out of the orchard and down the lane just in time to avoid meeting three people coming in from the opposite end. One was Lady Eva, she saw at a glance; the tall, dignified figure was Colonel Courtney, and in the one with red tabs Dilys had time to recognise her late *fiancé*, Captain Stafford.

Alan, coming out of the orchard, walked into them, and, Eva going ahead with the Staff Officer, was taken to task by his father for deserting her in favour of what she had described as a "dairymaid person."

"Because a lady like Miss Crane is doing something to help her country, does that put her outside the pale?" demanded Alan. "The fact of her doing dairy work doesn't alter her social standing in the least."

"From what I hear her social standing is —well, not exactly high," returned the Colonel loftily. "I am, as you know, a great believer in dairy work for girls"—Colonel Courtney had a model dairy of his own—"I admit her patriotism, but even her father's money—and I believe Joseph Crane is absurdly wealthy—does not remove the stigma of trade. It is blue blood that tells in the end, and you must remember Eva has first claim upon you," he finished as they reached the house.

For two or three days Dilys did not see Alan, and then one morning he walked into the dairy of Hawthorn Farm with a strange mixture of gloom and relief on his face.

Dilys, her pink sleeves rolled above her elbows, stopped in her business of polishing a milk pan to greet him.

The young officer leant against the ivy-framed window, and his face broke into a smile.

"Eva's chucked me up," he said bluntly. "She's annexed old 'Red Tabs'—Captain Stafford, you know. She wanted a Staff Officer, and she's got him. Peace be with them."

"For a rejected suitor you are unsuitably cheerful," rebuked Dilys, remarkably cheerful herself in the face of her erstwhile lover's fickleness. "What does Colonel Courtney say?"

"Oh, he's furious with her. I left him on the verge of apoplexy. Though what he's got to grumble about I don't know, for I told him I meant to marry you instead."

"Aren't you a little hasty?" Dilys faced him challengingly, though a dimple came in her rounded cheek. "You see, this is, as it were, my first intimation."

"But you do love me, Dilys?" Lieutenant Courtney took possession of her, pan and all; he had a masterful way with him that Dilys secretly adored.

"You're a dear, silly boy, but somehow I do love you," she murmured, smoothing the pink frock which the force of the Army had crushed. "But I see now why the Colonel only just escaped apoplexy. Of course, he knows about the Cough Cure, and hates it."

"He *was* rather annoyed—threatened to cut off my allowance, and all that, but——"

"I've got plenty for both," suggested Dilys a little timidly.

Alan's lips set in a line of determination. "You're a darling, but I couldn't live on my wife," he said quietly. "No, we must win over the Pater somehow. The poor old boy was upset this morning because the two dairymaids have left him in the lurch. He's awfully proud of his model dairy, and had invited a deputation from one of the committees who are advocating dairy work for ladies to come to-morrow and inspect it. He's always boasted of the success of the dairy, and now one dairymaid's left suddenly to get married, and the other to go and make munitions, and there's no one who knows a separator from a milk-churn to do the honours."

Dilys had been leaning against the shelf on which the milk pans were ranged regarding her neat ankles with profound reflection. Now she raised eager eyes to her lover.

"It's the chance of a lifetime," she said. "Don't you see? I'll step into the breach and save the situation. Your father is bound to be grateful, and it'll be one step towards winning his goodwill."

Had Colonel Courtney been a little less desperate he would probably have scouted the idea of borrowing a dairymaid from Hawthorn Farm, but he had boasted so openly of the success of his dairy, and the efficiency and devotion of his dairymaids. He rather prided himself on being a model employer, and to own that he had been deserted at the last moment was not to be thought of. So, rather ungraciously, he accepted Dilys' offer, conveyed by Alan, to that young gentleman's unbounded delight.

Colonel Courtney unbent somewhat when, going into the white-walled dairy the next

afternoon, he found Dilys, becomingly dainty in pale green linen, ready to do the honours. Her air of quiet efficiency pleased him, and he was relieved to find that she had a soft, well-bred voice and took no liberties with her "h's." He found himself almost unconsciously contrasting her charming smile and eager, expressive face with the rather wooden good looks of Lady Eva. By the time the deputation arrived he was quite ready to hold her up as an example of what a girl, previously inexperienced in dairywork, could do after a comparatively short training

Dilys propped distracting white arms, from which the pink sleeves were rolled back, on the table, and surveyed the tanned and cheerful countenance of her companion.

"You made a splendid impression," Alan declared next day when he and Dilys were enjoying tea in the grateful shade of a copper beech at Hawthorn Farm. "The old chap's bitterly disappointed in Eva; he likes spirit, and he sees now she hasn't got a bit. Besides, his martial instinct is up in arms at her wanting me to play the slacker. You may capture his heart on the rebound."

"I wish I could." Dilys propped distracting white arms, from which the pink sleeves were rolled back, on the table, and surveyed the tanned and cheerful countenance of her companion. "I do so want him to like me. If only we could break down his prejudice and persuade him to swallow the Cough Cure," she finished with a smile.

"I've great hopes of him," Alan returned. "He'll lose his heart to you in the end—bound to! At present he's full of the big review to be held on Friday at Kidsbury. General R—— is to review the troops, and heaps of big guns are to be there. No, I'm not going. He's going to drive himself over in the car—got to be there at 10.30, so it'll be, 'If you're waking call me early, call me early, mother dear,' for both of us on Friday morning."

"Yes. It wouldn't do for him to be late," agreed Dilys reflectively.

"Rather not! General R——'s a stickler for punctuality, and the Pater's terribly proud of his own reputation in that direction."

"Can your father do repairs? Mend punctures, and that sort of thing?" Dilys' forehead was wrinkled in thought, as one evolving a weighty problem.

"No!" Alan shook his head decidedly. "He's a bit of a muff over motors, but he won't own it, and now the chauffeur's enlisted, insists on driving himself everywhere. Why?"

"Only an idea!" Dilys' eyes flashed mischief. "I suppose he'll go over the moors? Yes, I thought so. You undertake to see that there's no spare wheel on the car, and—well, leave the rest to me. I'm going to win your father over by desperate means if necessary."

All that day Dilys congratulated herself that she had brought her little two seater with her to Little Hamlet, and that she could drive it herself. By half-past nine next morning she was sitting among the bracken beside the moorland road, the car, myrtle green, like her silk sports coat, drawn up at the edge of the grass. She was picking heather with an air of entire detachment when Colonel Courtney's grey car appeared in the distance. A few minutes later it whizzed

"God bless my soul!" cried the Colonel, and departed to head off an indiscreet servant who was advancing to take away the tea-things.

past. Dilys, her back to the road, flashed an expectant smile, which deepened as a loud oath rent the peace of the summer morning. She turned to see the grey car slowing up, and the Colonel on the eve of getting out.

Colonel Courtney, his hawk-like face red and disturbed, was examining the tyre when she approached, her grey eyes full of sympathy, her golden-brown hair blown into curling tendrils beneath her green silk cap.

"Can I help you?" Dilys asked solicitously. "It's a bad puncture, isn't it? But you've got a spare wheel, of course, and we can whip it on in no time."

"There's no spare wheel," grunted the irate Colonel. "Ought to be, no doubt, but there isn't," glaring at the damage in helpless desperation.

"Dear me! How tiresome!" Dilys bent to examine the puncture and hide the smile that hovered on her lips. "We might mend it, but——"

"No time!" Colonel Courtney consulted his watch. "It's 9.55 now, and I'm due at Kidsbury by 10.30 sharp. Must be there. Big review on. General R—— to be present—and not a garage for miles," and he swept the heath-clad landscape with an air of outraged impotence. His eyes lighted on the two-seater and stayed there.

"Nearly ten miles to Kidsbury," murmured Dilys, perfectly aware of his desire, and determined not to help him. "I could drive back to Little Hamlet and get the garage people to send a man to repair it, but——"

"My dear young lady, there isn't time!" burst forth the Colonel, his iron-grey moustache fairly bristling withimpatience. He paused, then: "I know it's a lot to ask, but the case is urgent—could I possibly prevail upon you to take me to Kidsbury in your car?" he asked.

"Why, certainly!" Having brought him to his knees, as it were, Dilys was all eagerness to assist. "How silly of me not to suggest it! I'll have you there in less than half-an-hour. She's a game little car."

True to her word, Dilys deposited a grateful and relieved Colonel at the parade-ground a good five minutes before time, and smiled her most captivating smile as he voiced his appreciation.

"It was indeed good of you to take pity on me, Miss Crane," he said, his keen, distinguished face softening to a genial smile. "I can't stop to thank you properly now, but perhaps to-morrow you could find time to come up to The Manor to tea, and help Alan and me eat the raspberries."

"I should love to," said Dilys, and with that he saluted and strode away, leaving her to drive home and issue instructions at a garage in the town to send out and take charge of the broken-down car.

Dilys turned her car homewards with the comfortable feeling of one who has done a

good day's work. She drove leisurely through the scented summer air until she reached the moorland road where Colonel Courtney's car had come to grief. Here she descended, and examined the road with an air of absorption. When she resumed her seat, her hands were not empty.

"I'm glad I put two rows," she murmured, contemplating the dozen or so large nails which lay in her palm. "It was the second line of attack that did it."

* * * * *

When Dilys, cool and fresh as a daisy in white voile, with touches of hydrangea pink, arrived at The Manor the next afternoon she found Alan and the Colonel decorating the lawn and casting expectant glances at the dainty tea-table.

"Glad to see you, Miss Crane!" The Colonel gave her a cordial handshake. "You'll take pity on two clumsy men and pour out for us, won't you?"

"Of course I will." Dilys established herself behind the silver teapot, while Alan, his alert, sunburnt face radiating satisfaction, hovered devotedly at her side.

It was a merry little party, and before the spontaneous gaiety of the two young people even the Colonel unbent, and discovered, to his surprise, that Dilys, untitled though she might be, had a charm and power of attraction which Lady Eva, with all her aristocratic lineage, had never possessed.

Truth to tell, Eva and her entire family had fallen greatly from favour since, in addition to deserting Alan, her father now announced his intention of giving up Meadowlands, as, with Eva married, so large a house was unnecessary.

"Goodness knows who'll take it off my hands!" finished the Colonel, after relating his woes to Dilys, who, by a miracle, had gauged his taste in sugar and cream to a nicety. "Big houses are a drug in the market, what with the war and one thing and another."

Dilys nodded sagaciously, and flashed a knowing smile at Alan beneath her rose-trimmed hat. "Perhaps I can help you?" she said. "You see, I've been painting Little Hamlet in such glowing colours to my father that he's quite in love with it already. He'll be back in six weeks, and then we shall be looking out for a country house. Meadowlands would be just the thing."

"Upon my word, young lady, you get me out of all my troubles!" exclaimed the Colonel, rising and setting down his empty cup. "I should like nothing better than to have so charming a neighbour. I'm a crusty old fellow, but you've taught me something, my dear. As for Alan, he'll be delighted to have you at Meadowlands—that is, until he can persuade you to come and preside over The Manor. What do you say, my boy?" beaming genially at his khaki-clad son.

"I say you're a brick, Pater!" returned that young gentleman. "And now if you'll clear out"—sliding an arm round the shoulders of the girl who had risen and stood flushed and radiant at his side—"and give Dilys and me a chance——"

"God bless my soul!" cried the Colonel, and departed to head off an indiscreet servant who was advancing to take away the tea-things. "For two pins I'd have kissed her myself," he muttered into his grizzled moustache.

ALL CHANGE!

Farewell dress-clothes of heavenly cut
Wherein so often I have stood
Serene and calm, the perfect knut,
And kissed fair maidens for their good.
There is a term to every joy,
There is a grave for every sorrow;
Deal gently with each outworn toy—
You see, I'm joining up to-morrow!

François.

The PEARL NECKLACE

By Bertram Munn.

"It is the little rift within the lute,
That by and bye will make the music mute,
And ever widening slowly silence all."

I.

John Tremain, possessor of quite the nicest wife in Surbiton, surveyed himself pleasantly in his bedroom mirror. It showed him a good-looking, well-built man of forty, in trousers, waistcoat, and shirt-sleeves, carefully adjusting a bow necktie. This operation finished, he put on his coat, stepped back a little way, and viewed himself as a whole.

He was evidently satisfied, for he commenced softly whistling a ragtime ditty as he crossed the room and unlocked a drawer. From it he took a small leather case, opened it, put in his thumb and forefinger, and drew out a long, glistening string of pearls. He examined them critically for a moment or so, held them out at arm's length—with his head on one side—then dropped them into a little heap in the centre of his right hand, and finally tossed them joyfully into the air and caught them again. After that he sat down at the dressing-table and wrote on the back of a visiting card: "*To the best little girl in the world.*"

A cynic might say that after fifteen years of married life John Tremain could not possibly have been writing such an affectionate sentence for his wife's benefit. The cynic would be right. He was not! The pearls were a present to a lady friend whom he was taking out to supper that night, a friend who struck him as younger, more vivacious, more original, and infinitely more exciting than his own wife. In fact, even as he thought of her now he experienced all the pleasant anticipations of romantic youth. And at his age, too! Forty!

As he rose to his feet and picked up his overcoat he felt not a day older than twenty-one. Twenty-one is a dangerously romantic age. Well! He *felt* dangerously romantic! He pictured a little table tucked away in seclusion; a red-shaded light, Rosie, with her lovely arms and shoulders, the string of pearls, and then admiration and gratitude shining in those splendid big, brown eyes of hers. Even that alone was better than staying at home with a wife who was quite pretty and charming in her way, but who had long since ceased to appeal to him. A fellow must have a change now and then.

He came downstairs blithely, putting on his overcoat *en route*, took his hat from the hall-stand, opened the door, and stepped out into the cool night air.

The full moon was out, and as he strolled towards the station he indulged in still more sentimental thoughts.

Presently he lit a cigar and became reflective, finding quite an astonishing number of restrictions and inconveniences in married life. From these he drifted automatically to philosophy—making the best of things. That was what he intended doing to-night!

And then his thoughts were suddenly broken into by the unexpected appearance of his wife walking towards him.

He obtained command of his surprise—and annoyance—very quickly.

"Hello!" he said.

His wife took his arm in that silly, childish way of hers.

"It's so good of you to come and meet me, old boy," she said. "I didn't think you'd be back by now."

He hesitated, stammered, and then blurted out the truth.

"I'm afraid I hadn't come to meet you, Mary. I'm just going up to Town again."

She let go his arm, disappointment showing in her face and voice.

"Jack! You're not!"

"Sorry, but I must!"

"Is it some horrid business arrangement?"

"Yes!"

"What a shame! Couldn't you have arranged some other time? You knew it was Tommy's birthday, Jack!" she said reproachfully. "He'll be so disappointed!"

To tell the truth, he had quite forgotten it was his son's birthday. That was because he had ordered him a bicycle a week or so before and it had not been delivered yet. One can't remember everything. He had left for work early that morning, before Tom or Mary were up, and had accidentally met Rosie at lunch-time, and arranged to see her the same evening.

He said he was sorry he had forgotten. "But, in any case," he added, "I couldn't very well have fixed it up for another day."

His wife was really hurt, however. "You never seem to be at home now, Jack," she said. Her voice hinted that she was perilously near the verge of tears, and he objected to sentimentality—in his own wife, at any rate.

"Don't be absurd, Mary. A man's interests must occasionally lie outside his home. I can't spend *all* my time there." Feeling the weakness of his position, he exaggerated.

"Of course not, dear, but——"

He became irritable. "I shall miss the train if I stand here arguing. I'm late as it is. Good-bye!" He raised his hat and commenced hurrying on again, extremely annoyed with his wife for having detained him, and with himself for having been such a fool as not to have chosen some other way to the station. He disliked making more excuses and telling more lies than were absolutely necessary, and, above all, he hated protests from his wife. Why couldn't she be happy? He treated her better than most husbands treated their wives—gave her a nicer home, more comforts, finer clothes, and an all round better time. She couldn't expect schoolboy love as well after all these years.

Abruptly he dismissed the subject. It was unpleasant.

Now, Rosie was different! He put his hand in his pocket to see that the pearls were still there—and suddenly stood still, as if petrified. His overcoat pockets were empty! A little excitedly he patted various other parts of his clothes. But the bulge of the leather case welcomed him nowhere.

Naturally, it did not! In his hurry he had left the pearls, the case, and that incriminating little note on the dressing-table at home.

The thought gave him a strange, scared feeling. His wife would see it the moment she entered the room. In a second she would understand his haste to get away from her and catch the train.

He did not definitely picture a scene, but he foresaw endless difficulties and annoyances. He even felt sorry for her. It would be a blow to any woman to find that her husband was not quite faithful. To Mary, who trusted him implicitly, it would come as a terrible shock.

Without further delay he did the only thing possible. He commenced hurrying back home again, almost breaking into a run at times. He calculated he could just about overtake her. He would miss the train, but he could easily wire to Rosie and catch the next. Anything was better than his wife finding out.

He hurried on, and at last caught sight of her turning a corner. He reached it within a few yards of her, just as she was crossing the road. Her head was bent. He couldn't help noticing that.

And then suddenly his attention was whisked away from her in the direction of something else. He rushed forward impetuously, grasped his wife by the arm, swung her round, and went down in the blaze of the two great headlights of a slithering motor-car.

Consciousness returned to him in the form of strange shapes which hovered and swam about in a half-darkness. Then the sound of a harsh, grating voice came to him:

"Stand back there! *Stand back!*"

He blinked his eyes and looked again. A face was bending over him—a man's—not Mary's. He was a little surprised at this. Where was she?

He managed to sit up, with the aid of a supporting arm evidently belonging to the owner of the face.

"Better?"

He swallowed. "Yes," he said.

Then, still with assistance, he got slowly to his feet and looked round.

A short way off two men were carrying a stretcher, and, even as he looked, they stopped opposite his house.

He became dizzy again and swayed uncertainly. But the arm which was helping him slipped quickly round his waist.

"Can you manage to walk, do you think?"

"Yes," he answered mechanically.

The dizziness had gone just as suddenly as it came, and in its place an astonishingly

clear light of reason broke out. In the second he was finding his voice again a hundred remorseful thoughts flashed through his mind.

"Is . . . is my wife hurt?" he managed to stammer out.

"Badly! I saw the whole thing. But for you she'd have been killed outright. We've sent for a doctor at once. . . . Ah! There he is!"

He saw the door of his house open and let out a flood of light. Into it stepped the two men with their burden. Immediately afterwards followed a man in a top hat.

John tried to hurry, but was hindered by the sudden arrival of a sharp pain in his right leg. It ran zig-zag through his whole body and reached his head, where a throbbing broke out. He repressed the desire to cry out, however, and with the help of his companion managed to jog along in a jerky fashion.

At last, after an agony of pain, he reached home and was led into the drawing-room, where he collapsed on the settee. A white-faced servant entered the room.

"Don't bother about me," he gasped. "Go and see how your mistress is at once."

She stood still, dabbing her eyes.

"Well?" he half shouted. The pain and the excitement had completely unnerved him.

The girl broke into hysterical sobbing.

"Good God!" he exclaimed. In terror he looked at the face of the man who had helped him into the house. It told him the truth only too clearly.

"She's not . . . she's not . . .?" he began.

The man bowed his head.

Half dazed by the pain throbbing in his leg, John was scarcely able to grasp the fact that his wife was dead. The only thing perfectly clear to him was the growing intensity of his own physical condition. His leg, his body, and his head seemed to be wreathed in fire, more consuming and angry with every passing second.

He tried to rise, but could not. Then he tried to speak. That, too, had become impossible. At last his attempts relaxed, the room and its occupants swayed, spun round, and then suddenly vanished.

II.

During his convalescence John realised for the first time in an otherwise healthy and vigorous career how important a woman was to a man during illness. True, the woman in his case was only the nurse—it was not his wife—but he seemed to appreciate and understand certain depths which he had never bothered about before. Tenderness and patience were palpable in her every action, and in some way she reminded him of his dead wife, of a side of her which he had never noticed until he had seen it in this other woman.

He recollected her smile, the wonderful, motherly smile she always had for their boy, Tommy. He thought of her patience, her splendid patience when he himself found everything wrong with the world. He recalled a thousand and one things which in his blindness he had never seen before.

And then with a forced cynicism he told himself that it was too late to worry now. Her splendour and his folly were both things of the past. Dead!

It was, perhaps, the best philosophy he could achieve, and with the return of the use of his limbs he became more and more inured to his loss. He even saw Rosie again, after some six months had elapsed.

Now that it was not a question of stealing, now that he was perfectly free to do as he chose, Rosie had lost much of her glamour. She was still pretty, vivacious, and charming. Her hair was still the same auburn tint, her eyes were large and brown, her neck, and arms, and shoulders still exquisitely moulded. But there it ended. Behind it all there was nothing else, no depth.

He was sorry, because . . . well! because he wanted another mistress for his home, a woman who could be a mother to Tommy and a wife to himself, a wife he could really appreciate this time. In a moment of rash sentimentality he even asked Rosie to become his wife.

She laughed at him and told him not to be silly.

"My dear," she exclaimed. "Fancy me settling down to the joys of home life! I'm too *young* for it! Silly boy!"

Afterwards he was extremely grateful that she had refused him. It was more on his son's account than his own that he was thankful.

In Tommy he caught glimpses of the dead woman, sudden little flashes of expression and manner, which either scared him by their uncanniness or else started a remorseful train of thought worrying him. Had he married Rosie he felt that it would have been a sacrilege as long as Tommy was there. In some way it would be hitting the dead woman through the boy.

Morbid as the thought was he could not banish it. He wanted a woman who would replace the great gap in his son's life and in his own. And yet he was afraid that any

His wife laughed, and then held up the necklace. "What a darling you are," she whispered. "Fancy giving *me* a present on *Tommy's* birthday!" (Page 339, col. 2.)

woman he married would fall short of his previous wife, and lack the great understanding, the patience, the real depth which she had. He saw how much it had counted in the lives of himself and his son, and almost unconsciously he came to weigh in the balance every women he knew, every fresh acquaintance he met.

And so, at last, he gave up the quest of the ideal, and proposed to an attractive and pretty little woman whom he had known for years as an acquaintance.

She accepted him with a modesty which was embarrassingly fresh and youthful, and as he kissed her he felt almost old enough to be her father.

They were married in a month, however, and soon he began to realise that the simplicity and youthfulness of his new wife were but a veneer. Underneath lay the love of pleasure and fine clothes, the deftness of the born coquette, the studied simplicity which was an art, in short, a hundred and one things which showed years of experience and careful preparation. She knew and understood a man's heart emotionally better than any surgeon ever understood it physically. And she was not even above flirting with his guests in his own house.

One day he discovered her kissing another man. He was coming out of the dining-room into the hall when she was wishing the guest "good-night!" In the shadows of the curtains he stopped suddenly, hesitated a moment whether to step forward and thrash the man, and then withdrew quietly into the room again.

Presently the hall door slammed, and his wife entered.

He looked at her.

"Well?" he said.

Something in his voice must have made her suspicious, but she laughed. "Well, Jack, old boy! Had a jolly evening?"

"*Very!* Have you?"

"Yes! Of course!"

"Even in the hall?"

"What do you mean?" She had gone scarlet.

"I want to know what *you* mean!" he half shouted.

She looked at him quickly, wondering just how far bluff would carry her, and realised at once that he knew.

"You saw?" she asked.

"I did:"

"It's a pity you spy on your own wife," she exclaimed.

"I was not spying. I came out of the room casually. I happened to see you. For a second I hesitated whether to throttle him and kick him out into the street. Then I decided to take the matter quietly." He paused. "Is that the first time?" he asked suddenly.

"Yes:"

"On your honour?"

"Yes!"

"D'you care for him?"

"Of course not," she laughed. "It was only fun."

"Fun!" he said. "Good Heavens! Do you realise you're my wife? Do you think there's fun in married women——"

She interrupted him petulantly.

"Don't moralise, Jack. It's no worse for a married woman to kiss another man than it is for a married man to kiss some other pretty girl he knows. And how many husbands could say they've not done that?"

Her coolness amazed him. If she were going to try and excuse her action, to revel in it almost—— Suddenly his anger was checked. Memory, with one of the strange tricks it has, dragged up and interposed an episode of the past. He saw once again that night many years ago when he had deliberately deceived Mary. He saw himself admiring and toying with the pearl necklace which he had bought for the other woman. He remembered the way he had forgotten it, and hurried back home again, the sight of his wife's danger, the sudden rush, the blinding light and the crash, the overwhelming darkness, and then——

John Tremain opened his eyes slowly.

He was lying on his back in bed. By his side was a doctor, and just behind him—by all that was wonderful!—Mary, his wife!

In her hand she had the pearl necklace, and the moment his eyes fell on her she came towards the bed.

"Jack!" she said, and never had her voice sounded so soft and caressing.

He put out a hand, unable to understand, and as she took it he found his voice.

"What's happened?" he murmured.

The doctor's cheerful voice answered him. "You've been unconscious, my boy, for just over fifteen minutes."

Jack considered a moment.

"Good Heavens!" he said at last. "It's been an eternity with hell thrown in!" He turned to his wife again, half unable to believe in her presence.

"Poor boy!" she said. "Have you been dreaming?"

He nodded.

"They say that when you're near death the whole past flashes before you. I seem to have proved an exception. I saw the future—as it won't be!"

His wife laughed, and then held up the necklace.

"What a darling you are," she whispered. "Fancy giving *me* a present on *Tommy's* birthday!"

He felt an utter cad. A man who feels that once in his life is never past redemption.

"Well, little woman," he said, "fourteen years ago to-day didn't *you* give *me* a present?"

He looked up at her eyes. There were tears in them.

The LETTERS of a FLAPPER

Our best motives are often sadly misunderstood in this world, as April found when she danced in the sacred cause of charity at a *matinée*. In the following letter to her uncle she relates the dire results of her efforts to do her bit.

Mon Oncle Cheri,

I ache in every bone of my fair limbs and I am sore in spirit. It all came from my little struggly efforts to do good, and real blug has almost flowed, as well as the damage I've told you of. Yet when you hear the whole story and I ask you, "can you blame your littlest April?" you will reply, "No! 'Course not!" and you will be right.

You see, it began over my wanting to do something to help in the war. On account of this and the beastly daylight-saving stunt, when you can't go to sleep 'cos it's light when you go to bed, and you wake up about four a.m., 'cos it's light then anyway, I tossed upon my girlish couch, thinking, thinking. . . .

And then I thought of my pal, Gwyneth Greatorex, whose parent is Minister for Fine Arts, you know, and she's always getting up these stage-and-society shows for good causes. As I realised she was in the midst of getting up another I rushed round and said I simply had to be in it on the Society side.

"Can you do anything?" she asked,

These light mornings I've been waking up about four a.m., and tossing upon my girlish couch thinking how I could help in the war.

"Can you do anything?" she asked, picking up a pencil and pad. . . .
"I can dance," retorted your niece, regarding her neat ankles.

picking up a pencil and pad and looking very business-like in one of Mauricette's gown-poems.

"I can dance," retorted your niece, regarding her neat ankles. "Have you Clay van Schuyler on your list, Gwyneth? He dances the 'Paprika' with Muriel Moon in the revue at the Alcazar. Why not let him dance it with me at your *matinée*?"

"What about your people?" queried Gwyneth. "Do you think Lady Vereker would approve of the 'Paprika'?"

"She's never seen it," I comforted, "and since I'm doing it for the wounded anything is righteous."

So it was agreed.

In the meanwhile Ronnie Waterfield fetched up in Town. He is now a Probationary Flight Sub-Loot. in the R.N.A.S., but he had already made history when we lived in the country in my kid days at Sawtrees, for then occurred one of the most affecting boy-and-girl affairs between him and me.

I suppose I was fourteen at the time, and he had an unsympathetic guardian who used to scourge him for shinning down a gutter-pipe, or some sort of pipe, after he, Ronnie, was s'posed to be in bed, and talking sweet nothings to me as I leant out of my casement.

Ronnie, in the light of the storied past, did his best to annex me. I went so far as to achieve one of the newest things in powder-blue frocks that contrasted rather decently with the darker hue of his uniform. He was ardent, Uncle, simply ardent.

He devoured me with his eyes, drained cocktails at a draught at our luncheons together, and slumped down the front-door steps quite broken when at length he left me. Goodness knows howoften he proposed. But then I am a regular Gibraltar in that respect. All these attacks melt away before the *feu-de-barrage* of my golden eyes. Well, well!

In the natural course of events Ronnie got to know about Gwyneth's *matinée*, Clay van Schuyler, and the "Paprika."

I wouldn't let him come to rehearsals, which took place at the Alcazar in the

He devoured me with his eyes, and drained cocktails at a draught at our luncheons together.

morning under Gwyneth's critical eye. You see, he might have killed Clay, and Clay is an American citizen from Skunksville, Tennessee. Also, the "Paprika" is a little more exciting done in one's street clothes. In the real thing Clay is discovered looking at the real moon as the curtain goes up, and Muriel Moon enters by the simple expedient of turning a cartwheel. I've always turned the most delicious cartwheels, so we didn't have to cut this out. We *did* tone down one or two stunts, partly because I haven't the nerve to be swung round and round by my heels like an Indian Club.

Well, Uncle, Ronnie grew more loving day by day. All the stripes he bore for me in his callow days seemed only to have intensified his affection, and a lapse of years wherein we never saw one another apparently put the final polish on the tender passion. It almost satisfied *me*, and I am a bit of a connoisseur. Ah! me, that all is now over between us!

I regret to tell you, darling, that the event which was destined to part us for ever turned out to be Gwyneth's *matinée* for the wounded. The audience made her lick her lips, and she is a glutton for crowned heads. There were the Grand Duke Alexandr Augustovitch, the Scandinavian Ambassador, Princess Nadia de Sans Souci, most of the House of Commons, and all the Army Council that

Clay and I were turned on to do the "Paprika." . . . I wore a black dancing frock, a silver head-dress, and silver bracelets on my ankles.

could get away. I don't suppose a ship in the Navy went unrepresented either, and every one of them paid for their seats.

After the massed bands of the Guards had played the 1812 Symphony, and Gwyneth and the best-known stage lover had done some of the juicy bits out of *Romeo and Juliet*, the need was felt for a little light relief, and Clay and I were turned on to do the "Paprika."

There's a little twiddly bit on the piccolo while he looks at the moon, to represent a nightingale, and then I cartwheeled on. I wore a black dancing frock, a silver head-dress, and silver bracelets on my ankles. The rest was all black, he being in dress clothes, and we then proceeded

Mother has been frightfully cross about the "Paprika," too. I've only the illustrated weeklies to comfort me.

to hit sparks off the "Paprika." It was the best turn of the day, Uncle. Even the Grand Duke, accustomed to the Russian Ballet, sighed, and was heard to say "Dear me!" or words to that effect, in his native tongue.

Naturally Ronnie, on leave, had procured a stall, and sat with his eyes, trained by aerial reconnaissance (rather good that for me, what?), glued on to our show. As I came back to bow in response to the applause I caught a glimpse of him in the third row. His face resembled a thunder-cloud, and he fumbled for the sword that he has never yet possessed, and isn't likely to as far as I can see. Shortly afterwards he tore round to the stage-door, and sent up his card. I received him in my dressing-room, where I was thanking Clay van Schuyler for dancing with me, and Gwyneth, who has no jealousy in her, was congratulating us both.

"I should like a word with you, sir," snarled Ronnie to Clay. Marking my tragic glance, Gwyneth faded away. I was alone with what looked like being a first-class fight.

"What do you mean by bunny-hugging with Miss Vereker in that scandalous way?" demanded Ronnie. "You took advantage of her sweet and charitable nature to behave like a scoundrel. You actually—er—em-braced her. You——"

"Ronnie," I interrupted, "don't be an ass. Can't you recognise Art when you see it? Mr. van Schuyler might very well take offence at what you say, only, fortunately, *he* is a grown-up person——"

"And a nootral Miss Vereker. A nootral —never forget that!" put in my dancing partner suavely. "Pleased to have met you, sir. *Good* afternoon," he continued, and walked out, a living benediction.

I looked all over Ronnie carefully from head to foot.

"Mr. Waterfield," I said, "kindly never speak to me again. I dislike being made to look ridiculous."

"Of course, if you wanted the greasy brute to kiss you——" stormed Ronnie.

"You are very young, but youth doesn't excuse everything," I continued, still on the mountain tops. "And I cannot waste my time being a nursery governess to you. You are keeping me waiting, Mr. Waterfield."

So he drifted out of my life.

The worst of it is, he's a nice boy, only silly over trifles. And mother has been frightfully cross about the "Paprika," too. I've only the illustrated weeklies to comfort me. *They* were ripping.

So, uncle, write me an understanding letter please, and send me some really worthy chocs. I need comfort.

Your bruised

APRIL.

LITTLE CHINTZ ROOM.

Oh, little chintz room in the sunlight,
Full of garden scent and sound;
Where freshness and dainty colour,
And country peace abound;
Where flowers in vast profusion
Rival the varied tints
Of the delicate, blended confusion
Found in your summer chintz.

Oh, little chintz room in the lamp-light,
At close of a summer day,
With a tender curtain of darkness
Shutting the world away,
When the slow, sweet hours are thrilling
With perfume over the land,
And the stillness is stirred by the trilling
Of a nightingale near at hand.

Oh, little chintz room in the distance
Of tired memory's dream,
The thought of you guides my wandering
Like a beacon's welcoming beam.
There's a hope that's as faded as fragrant,
That I may go back to the past,
And peace may be found for the vagrant
In the little chintz room at last!

Iris Hawkins.

SILVERDALE of BRAIN STREET

By George Dilnot.

"The heights by great men reached and kept
Were not attained by sudden flight,
But they, while their companions slept,
Were toiling upward in the night."

I.

You would very likely have misjudged Jimmie Silverdale had you seen him grinning amiably over the poker-table, one lank lock of black hair drooping over a sallow forehead and a thin hand raised in inimitable gesture.

In the intervals of play he was expounding to a novelist, a war correspondent, a sporting editor, the conductor of a popular periodical, and a fellow-reporter the means by which he intended to delude a trusting news-editor who had intrusted him with the duty of interviewing a Cabinet Minister who had just become the proud father of triplets.

Jimmie's ingenuity and resource were never more brilliantly displayed than when he preferred poker to work. He made no secret of his failing. If he were absent from the Paper Club between one and five and six till midnight, you might be sure something out of the usual routine was happening. The ordinary newspaper "story" to which he was assigned he neglected with cynical cheerfulness. Yet he was paid £750 a year, and was worth double. There were plenty of rivals of the *Daily Wire* who would have given him double.

Perhaps his superiors were not altogether so ingenuous as he affected to suppose. For Jimmie Silverdale was that rare bird—a newspaper genius. Conscientious men might spend many hours and much labour gathering and verifying facts—and then write a "story" less ably and accurately than Jimmie with a hasty telephone call and a vivid imagination. An intuitive instinct, coupled with a rare deductive faculty—both sharpened by the necessity of saving time to devote to poker—served him well.

He glanced at his cards as he finished the tale of his ruse with a chuckle.

"Office wants you on the telephone, Mr. Silverdale," interrupted a messenger.

"Go away, Silver," advised Merry, the sporting editor. "The Archbishop of Canterbury's murdered his cook with his crozier. Go and dabble your hands in blood."

"Mr. Silverdale's not here," declared the war correspondent.

"Not been here since lunch," confirmed Silverdale. "Come on. Who's in his pot?"

The boy slipped away like a phantom. He had been too long at the Paper Club to be amused by the evasions of its members. As Silverdale was raking in the spoils of a full hand he returned.

"I was told to tell you when you came in that a big murder has broken loose. Mrs. Linne Riley has been found shot in a taxi."

Jimmie thrust his money hurriedly in his pocket. Everyone at the table had heard of Mrs. Riley—*the* Mrs. Riley whose fashionable caprices, no less than her beauty and her millions—the latter inherited from a husband who had gone down in the *Titanic* disaster—had made her one of the most-talked-of women in London and New York.

One of the players shuffled the cards absently. He voiced the newspaper instinct which concerned itself less with the horror of the happening than with its "news value."

"Good story, Silver."

"Yep," agreed Jimmie. "Sorry I've got to go, boys. See you anon." He moved swiftly out.

II.

All the great resources of a modern newspaper were being brought swiftly into play even in the five minutes that elapsed before Jimmie reached the office. Greenford, the shirt-sleeved news-editor, a cigarette in a long amber holder in one corner of his mouth, was speaking through his desk telephone, talking to the bearded Scotch foreign editor, glancing through a heap of newspaper cuttings, and giving spasmodic instructions to the assistant news-editor, at one and the same time. He nodded to the reporter.

"Oh, there you are, Jimmie. . . . Yes, yes, get a motor if there's no train. All right. Good-bye."

He slapped down the receiver and went on quickly:

"A column of New York stuff ought to do us, don't you think, M'Cullagh? . . . Elson, send a wire to our man at Southampton to pick up what details he can of her private yacht. It was built there. Now, Jimmie, we want a first-class story from you."

Jimmie vaulted on to the paper-littered desk and swung his legs idly.

"It sounds good," he commented. "What's happened?"

"Taxi-driver picked a lady up in Bond Street an hour ago," said Greenford. "Instructed to drive to the Palatial Hotel. Commissionaire who opened the cab door there found a woman dead—shot. No weapon, no nothing. Hotel people identified her. Here's the tape message. That's all that's come through so far. She's got a country place at Ludford—Irons has gone down there by motor. Devlin is up at the Palatial—he'll be ringing up, I expect, in a minute or two. We shall be getting a column in from New York, and there's personal stuff which Austin is doing from the cuttings. There's Bryant and Mathers here on tap for any fresh ends. It's a splash story, Jimmie, and we're looking to you."

"Send Mathers down to the Yard," advised the reporter. "They'll not tell him anything yet, but something might crop up suddenly. He might 'phone up who's handling the case. I'll have a look through the cuttings quietly. I've had a worrying time over this triplet business."

"Lose much?" queried the news-editor sympathetically, passing over the clippings. Then, before Jimmie could answer, he grabbed the telephone. "Give me Mr. Salter. . . . Now get busy, Jimmie."

A newspaper crime investigator and a Scotland Yard detective approach a mystery from different points of view. The detective wants to pull the mystery to pieces as quickly as possible. To the newspaper man the solution does not always have the same importance. The by-products of the investigation may interest the public more than a swift and tame climax. In the unwritten table of values of Fleet Street, a mystery with a beautiful and rich woman as central figure is far beyond an exhaustive and possibly sordid explanation of a crime.

In the reporters' room, the dusty floor littered with old newspapers and cigarette ends, Jimmie Silverdale studied the story of Mrs. Riley as told by the newspaper cuttings dating from the time, ten years before, when she, an unknown chorus girl of twenty, had married Hector Riley at the Little Church Around the Corner in New York. She had plunged into all the eccentricities of fashionable life with the enthusiasm of a child, and the newspapers had not failed to do her justice, whether she merely led a tame cheetah on a chain through Central Park or gave a submarine dance in a ball-room constructed at enormous cost under the lake of one of her husband's properties.

Now and again he was interrupted by boys with strips of tape, telephone, or telegraph messages. The evening newspapers were laid red-hot by his elbow. There were hurried, mysterious, whispered conferences with Greenford or fellow-reporters, who carefully closed doors before they opened their mouths.

Nowhere are all the formalities of secrecy more closely observed than in a newspaper office when a big "story" is developing. An unguarded word caught by a tape-boy, a

window-cleaner, a clerk, may be incautiously repeated until it reaches the ears of keen rivals and a possible "beat" vanishes into thin air.

Silverdale had saturated himself thoroughly in all the available facts of the case when a slip of paper was thrust into his hand. He glanced at it and reached for his hat.

"Tell Mr. Greenford I'm going out now," he ordered, and crushed the evening papers into his pocket, to be perused later. If there was anything of importance in them, the hawk-eyed news-editor would not have missed it.

It was impossible to walk down Fleet Street without meeting men coming to and from the "story." Four times Jimmie shook off unwelcome rivals who offered him company. They accepted the repulse without offence as an intimation that Jimmie meant to play a lone hand.

Under the arch at the back of Charing Cross Station a burly man with a heavy moustache waited. He put out a big leg-of-mutton hand which the reporter shook.

"That you, Jimmie? You got my note? Come and let's have a drink. I don't want anyone to see me talking to you."

Once fairly out of sight in a retired saloon bar, he tossed off a Scotch with a sigh of relief.

"Queer job this. Got any line on it yet?"

Silverdale shook his head.

"What do they think of it up there?" He jerked his head vaguely in the direction of Scotland Yard. "Is it suicide?"

"No." The burly man (who held the rank of detective-sergeant at headquarters) was emphatic. "It's no suicide. I've been talking to Chinnery, who's handling the case. There's no pistol, for one thing. She'd only been shot a few minutes before she reached the Palatial—point twenty-two bullet. Taxi-driver hadn't stopped since he picked her up. It's a puzzle how it was done."

"What does Chinnery think?"

The Sergeant hunched his shoulders.

Greenford, the shirt-sleeved news-editor, a cigarette in a long amber holder in one corner of his mouth, was speaking through his desk telephone.

"It may be a hundred things when they get closer up. I've seen some of the letters she's had. Lots of men burnt their fingers there. There'll have to be a lot of sifting done. She's been blackmailed once or twice, too. I reckon she's had a gaudy time since the *Titanic* went down. But what I wanted to tell you is this:

"One of the waiters at the Palatial, who lives at Islington, saw her outside the Tube station one day last week talking to another woman. She was very quietly dressed, and the other woman was all in black, with a heavy veil. Now what the blazes was she doing at Islington? He noticed them particularly, he says, so it's not likely to be a mistake. Besides, she told her maid that she was going to lunch with Lady Pornton that day, and she never did anything of the kind. She'd no lunch engagement or anything else. There's

something that no one else has got, Jimmie."

"Righto, old son. It's good stuff. Let me know if you get hold of anything more. I'll get on to it. So long."

III.

Jimmie Silverdale's activities during the next few hours were many. The manager of the Palatial, aghast at the undesirable publicity to which that select caravanserai had attained, snubbed him. Chinnery, detective-inspector in charge of the case, was affable, and told funny stories when Jimmie questioned him about the affair. The taxi-driver, run to earth at Battersea after a stern chase, added little to what was already known. The commissionaire who had discovered the body was loftily offensive till a sovereign stuck to his fingers. Jimmie, with a wealthy newspaper behind him, considered money little when a story was to be got, and gold flowed lavishly from his hip-pocket until he gained access to the waiter who had seen Mrs. Riley at Islington.

For the first time that evening the boyish, irresistible smile flashed out wide-mouthed on the reporter's face as he left the hotel. Whatever happened, he had justified his existence. He had achieved the "first-class story" for which Greenford had asked.

He left the continuation of the investigation to his colleagues, and went back to the office. For a couple of hours he wrote, and then assisted the chief sub-editor to elaborate staring black headlines.

MRS. RILEY SHOT DEAD.

BEAUTIFUL WIDOW OF MILLIONAIRE MYSTERIOUSLY MURDERED IN TAXI.

WOMAN IN BLACK.

SECRET MEETING WITH VEILED LADY AT ISLINGTON.

"Got any idea who did it, Jimmie?" asked the chief sub idly. He took it for granted that more was known to the reporter than had been included in the report.

"Not the faintest. To-morrow I'll begin worrying about that. To-day all I wanted was a story. Boy! Run over to the club and get me some sausages and mashed potatoes, and a pint of bitter in a tankard. I'll hang on a bit. I'd like to see what's in the New York stuff."

Information, relevant and irrelevant, concerning the dead woman continued to trickle into the office. Jimmie read every word, his brain eagerly seeking, not so much for a clue to the murderer as for a fresh line by which he might search out a new aspect of the tragedy for the benefit of readers of the *Daily Wire*. At that moment there were scores of keen brains in rival offices on the same quest. Some trivial matter overlooked for an hour might mean the greatest disaster that can befall a big newspaper on a big "story"—that his paper alone should "fall down" on a point published in most of the others. That is the unforgiveable sin.

At midnight Silverdale went to the telephone for the eighth time.

"Are you there? . . . Who? . . . Hullo! That the Yard? C.I. Department. . . . I want Mr. Chinnery, please. . . . Gone home. . . . That you speaking, Wills. . . . This is Silverdale! What a pity. I've got something I wanted to tell him. . . . Oh, yes, I'll hold on."

He grinned at the chief sub, who had personally brought him a cable.

"Chinnery's there all right," he reassured him. "I'd like to bet on it. Hullo—that you, Mr. Chinnery? Silverdale speaking. Anything doing? . . . Tut, tut. It's against the regulations to swear. . . . Eh?"

His voice became gently ironical.

"Yes, I feel sure you'd have given us the tip if anything was stirring. It's a kind of habit you Yard folk have got. Now listen here, old chap. Did you know that the Riley woman had a sister? . . . Yes, that's so. We've just got in our American cables. She's a chorus girl in one of the revues here. . . . Yes, another name, of course. . . . Yes, I've got the name and the theatre, but I can't tell you—yet. I'll pick you up in a car to-morrow morning at eight, if you like, and we'll go and see her together. . . . Yes. Good-night. Pleasant dreams."

He had no particular distrust of Chinnery, but he hated unnecessary risks. A newspaper man knows by experience how secrets leak out. Jimmie would have intrusted his whole worldly wealth without question to a friend, but not to a soul would he willingly confide a prospective "beat."

"You seem to be pretty sure you'll get that address," said the chief sub.

"Chinnery's all right," said Silverdale. "His only fault is that he thinks too much of his duty. He'd let me go hang if he thought he'd get ahead with his case by it."

He touched a bell.

"Boy, ring up the Regal Theatre, and ask the stage-doorkeeper for the address of Mr. Fulton, the manager. Then ring up Fulton, and tell him the *Daily Wire* wants to speak to him—urgent."

IV.

All through that night Silverdale remained at the club ready for any sudden development that might arise. Three or four other "crime men," night sub-editors, and "make-up men" made the inevitable poker party. Discussion turned, of course, on the one topic of professional interest at the moment, but it was etiquette to avoid personal exploits. No man asked what another had done, or spoke of the result he himself might have achieved.

A hundred theories were discussed with the cynical humour and alert acuteness of specialists. All bemoaned their loss of sleep—yet not one would have slept easily beyond reach of a telephone wire and a taxi-cab. They had their vices, these men, but they paid stern, undeviating loyalty to their calt. It was noticeable that few of them drank—and none to excess. No one knew how soon or unexpectedly the utmost physical and mental capacity of each might be called upon.

Silverdale's lean face grew whiter with the dawn. He was not of the physique to do without sleep. The excitement of the game and an indomitable resolution alone kept him from collapse. But his mental alertness was unimpaired—it was sharpened by fatigue, if anything. When the game broke up, he was keyed to a preternatural degree of mental fitness.

He had named eight o'clock for the appointment with Chinnery chiefly because it was an unlikely hour for a newspaper man to be abroad. Promptly at eight the car drew up in the courtyard of Scotland Yard, and equally promptly the bronzed detective-inspector and a satellite sergeant were on hand. Chinnery scrutinised the reporter with a queer narrowing of the eyes before he stepped aboard the big car.

"You're a nice lad," he grumbled whimsically, tapping the copy of the *Daily Wire* he held in his hand. "I'd like to know where you got this about the veiled woman?"

Silverdale laughed.

"How *do* the newspapers get hold of these things?" he parried. "It's true, isn't it? I thought you'd have known about it."

Chinnery shook a finger at him in playful menace.

"You'll go too far one of these days, Silver. Ever hear of the Official Secrets Act?"

"Sure. I read it over before I go to bed every night. Penal servitude or any less punishment for tampering with a C.I. man. I'd love to go to gaol—with you, Chinnery. Come on. Jump in, and put your gag on. I'm going to pump you."

"If I didn't know you, Silver," said Chinnery, "I'd think this was humbug. You've got that address all right? There *is* a sister?"

"Honest Injun," said Silverdale. "Go ahead, driver."

Chinnery was a clever man with an enormous amount of experience, but he knew that Silverdale had facilities which were not possessed even by Scotland Yard. In present-day circumstances, a person with information to divulge is as likely to go to a newspaper office as a police-station. Yet, a newspaper man is sometimes a dangerous ally for a detective. His aim is essentially to tell what the police are doing to hunt down their quarry—matters on which the police do their best to keep quiet.

He sank back into a corner.

"Get on with that pump-handle," he said. "I know you won't take advantage. We don't want anything blurted out that might spoil our game."

"Rely on Willie," agreed Silverdale. "What's your theory?"

"Theory. Theories are man-traps. You can only go on facts. And the facts in this case don't amount to much."

The reporter pushed his bowler to the back of his head, and carefully tucked back his wandering lock of hair.

"She had a lot of admirers, hadn't she?" he said gently.

"H'm." Chinnery shut his right eye, and stared at his bland interlocutor with the other. "Who've you been talking to? It doesn't matter. I don't want to ask too many questions."

"But look here," persisted the other, "you've got some sort of an idea how it might have been done?"

"So have you," retorted Chinnery, "but you're not fool enough to publish it, and make yourself a laughing stock if you prove to be wrong. Now, how's this? She was shot by a point twenty-two bullet. There are plenty of small revolvers which take that size cartridge, and there isn't much of a report—not enough to be noticed particularly above the street traffic. Now, there was a block at Piccadilly Circus, and another at Trafalgar Square. A man might have leant in the window there, shot her, and walked away without anyone in the least suspecting anything out of the ordinary. There's one theory for you. I don't say it's mine."

"There are hundreds of miniature rifles as well as revolvers that take a point twenty-two cartridge," observed Silverdale thoughtfully.

The car swung off into a quiet Brixton by-street and halted before a block of flats.

"You'd better do the talking," advised Silverdale. "Mrs. Westmeon is the name—No. 34."

No. 34 proved to be up three flights of stairs; there was no lift, and Jimmie was breathless when Chinnery put his thumb on the bell.

"Sure not to be up," he said. "This is the middle of the night to theatrical folk."

As he spoke the swift opening of the door proved him wrong. It was as though their coming had been awaited. A tall woman of perhaps thirty-five, fully dressed, handsome and graceful, stood before them. A quick flicker—it might have been surprise, it might have been disappointment—passed over her face. She checked an exclamation and waited silently.

"Mrs. Westmeon?" asked Chinnery, fingering a card. Then, as she gave assent, he handed it to her. "I'm sorry to trouble you. You will probably understand my business. These gentlemen are Mr. Hartop, one of my assistants—and Mr. Silverdale."

Her slim fingers pressed more tightly on the edge of the door.

"You've come about—about my sister?" she said slowly.

"We wanted to see whether you might be able to help us in any way," explained Chinnery ingratiatingly. "May we come in?"

"Yes, yes, come in," she answered, as though half unconscious of what she was saying.

They followed her into a small sitting-room. Chinnery placed his hat on the table, and Hartop briskly produced a small pocket-book and a fountain pen. Jimmie, who knew the paralysing effect that knowledge of words being written down has on the average person, smiled grimly and walked to the window, allowing his gaze to wander idly on the street below. He would have approached things differently, but it was for the police to know their own business. For the time being he was merely a privileged spectator.

"The death of Mrs. Riley must have been a great shock to you?" began Chinnery gently, his shrewd grey eyes fixed on her appraisingly.

She started. Then she shook her head and her blue eyes became alert.

"No," she said calmly. "I can't say it was. What's the good of pretending? Me and Estelle never was what you'd call pals. I'm sorry she's dead, and it's a terrible thing and all that, but I can't cry about it. She never did anything for me."

"Ah!" Chinnery's tone was sympathetic. "She'd got swelled head, eh? Thought herself a cut above her family since she married Riley and got into society?"

"Something like that," agreed the woman indifferently. It seemed to Jimmie that her indifference was overdone.

"Well, tell us all about it in your own way. Tell us everything; it doesn't matter whether you think it important or not. I'll ask you about anything that's not clear."

"All right," she agreed. Rising, she crossed the room and rearranged one of the casement curtains which Jimmie had disarranged. "I guess it won't help you much. We haven't had much to do with one another since she took to high life. Where will I begin?"

"When did you quarrel?"

She blinked lazily at him. "Oh, that. You see, it was me that got Estelle on the boards when father died. She was a pretty kid, and she'd got more sense than I had. Not that she was above jewellery and champagne suppers and that sort of thing, but it went no further—see?"

"I think I do," said Chinnery gravely. "Go on."

"Then Hector Riley happened along. It was me he was stuck on—not her, then. Of course, he was pretty free, and me thinking she was only a kid and all that, I took her along sometimes. You're a man of the world, Mr. Chinnery?"

"She cut you out?" Chinnery was stroking his moustache.

Mrs. Westmeon nodded. Her calm was rapidly vanishing. "She did worse than that—the little Jezebel! There was another man—and she told Riley, so that he found us together." Her white teeth showed venomously. "It was a month after that that he married her. I went to see her, and I told her what I thought. Wouldn't you?"

She fixed her gaze fiercely on the inspector.

"That was the last time I saw her, and I never had a penny of her or his money. I can keep myself."

"Wait a moment." Chinnery leant forward. "What were you doing when you met her at the Underground station at Islington a week ago?"

Her composure had come back to her. She stared at him for a moment as if trying to grasp the question. "What do you mean? I haven't spoken to her for ten years."

"You're sure of that?" The detective's voice was acid.

"Quite sure." And then incredulously: "You don't think I killed her, do you?"

Chinnery laughed as though the suspicion that had entered the back of his mind was preposterous. "Of course not. It's

ridiculous. Well, Mrs. Westmeon, we may have to see you again, but we won't worry you any more just now. Good-bye for the present."

V.

The three men had reached the first landing when Jimmie seemed to recall something.

"I ought to get a photograph of that woman," he murmured, and turned. "Wait for me."

"Here, you, Silver——" remonstrated Chinnery, but the reporter had gone.

The front door of the flat remained unlatched. Without knocking Jimmie passed in swiftly. Mrs. Westmeon was standing by the window, her hand on the curtains. She wheeled quickly at his entrance, and her hand went to her heart.

"Sorry to trouble you again," said Jimmie suavely, "but I wanted to see you alone. Let me make it clear that I am not a police officer. I am merely a reporter on the *Daily Wire*."

She breathed relief.

"Then those men had no business to bring you here," she said fiercely. "What do you want now?"

"Pardon me. It was I who brought them here. I want to know why you keep a rook rifle in sections hidden in this place and whom you are signalling to with the window curtains."

"You——"

"I want an explanation—quick. Chinnery may take it into his head to come back after me. See that?"

He displayed a small black screw in the palm of his hand.

"I picked that up on the carpet a few minutes ago, and I know enough about firearms to know where it's from. If Chinnery had seen that he'd have torn the place down to get that rifle."

"There is no rifle," she protested.

"Now, Mrs. Westmeon, don't be a fool. There is a rifle and you've got it. More than that, I know how your sister was killed. Now——"

He paused menacingly.

"I never killed her," she screamed. "I never! I never! I can prove I had nothing to do with it."

Her whole figure was shaking.

"I am sure you can," he said reassuringly. "That will do for now. Understand me. I'm going to lock this room. If you attempt to enter it to-day or to leave the flat I shall have you arrested as an accessory. Come out."

He locked the door and placed the key in his pocket. Then he moved to the outer door and down the stairs to where the two detectives were waiting.

"Chinnery," he said, "don't ask questions, but let Hartop go back and stay in that flat till twelve o'clock to-night. Tell him not to let anyone in and especially no one out. By that time I may be able to produce your murderer for you."

Chinnery looked at the calm young man who was taking it upon himself to issue orders to a divisional detective-inspector of the Criminal Investigation Department. Then he lifted his hat and scratched his head.

"I don't know what you're driving at," he said.

"I don't mean you to," smiled Silverdale. "At twelve o'clock you'll know, and only then if you promise to hold it up from every other pressman living."

"I'll trust you," said Chinnery suddenly. "Though if you make a fool of me——"

"Trust little Willie," said Silverdale.

When he reached the office Silverdale put in a couple of hours of more or less hard work. When Greenford invited him to tell the result of his labours he shook his head.

"I fear to excite you, old son. Keep from three to four columns open for a big story to-night," he answered insubordinately and strolled away to the club. Not even to paper would he confide his secret till it was absolutely necessary.

At nine in the evening he returned and borrowed the room of the magazine page editor, into which he locked himself with a big pad of paper. When he emerged he was carrying a bundle of closely-written sheets. Greenford, who should ordinarily have handed over the desk to his night assistant at six, was waiting for him. He snatched the copy from him.

"At one o'clock this morning the arrest took place. . . ."

"What the——"

"That's all right," agreed Silverdale imperturbably. "It's written for to-morrow's paper. It will take place you know. I can 'phone through any further details."

With the quickness born of long practice Greenford ran through the rest of the copy.

"Great! Great! A peach of a beat!" he chuckled. "Here, Silver, what are you hanging about for? Get out of it. Where's the chief? No one must leave the office till the paper's gone to bed. I wonder where the chief is. We can't take risks with this. We'll hold it up for the last edition. Get out Silver—get out!"

In the background hovered Mrs. Westmeon. Silverdale avoided her eyes. "Now, gentlemen," he said quietly . . . "the murderer of Mrs. Riley is in that room."—

Jimmie got out. At Scotland Yard Chinnery and the Superintendent of the Criminal Investigation Department were not showing their impatience so openly as the news-editor, but it was curious that they were both sitting in a warm office with coats and hats on.

"What's this Chinnery tells me?" asked the Superintendent. "If you've done us down, Silver, we'll wait for you."

"I'll take the risk," said Jimmie. "You people are tight enough with me sometimes. You can't complain if I get my own back. Now I'm ready. Don't forget our compact This story is to be in the *Daily Wire* exclusively."

"You put us on to the man and we'll see to that," said Chinnery.

Jimmie's heart was beating quicker than he would have cared to admit when they stood again on the threshold of Mrs. Westmeon's flat. Hartop opened the door to them. In the background hovered Mrs. Westmeon. Silverdale avoided her eyes.

"Now, gentlemen," he said quietly, drawing a key from his pocket and passing it to Chinnery. "The murderer of Mrs. Riley is in that room."

The Inspector slipped in the key and turned it. As he threw back the door a middle-aged man with greying moustache stepped out.

"All right," he said huskily. "You've got me. I'll make no trouble."

"Who is this?" demanded the Superintendent.

"Let me introduce you to Mr. Westmeon," said Silverdale, "husband of this lady and murderer of her sister."

"The Inspector slipped in the key and turned it. As he threw back the door a middle-aged man with greying moustache stepped out.

VI.

Jimmie Silverdale consumed innumerable cigarettes while he sat in a room at Scotland Yard and talked with the Superintendent. Chinnery and a staff of half-a-dozen men were busy elsewhere, collecting up the threads of evidence that had been placed in their hands.

"Sorry if I made things awkward," apologised Jimmie, "but I had my paper to consider first of all. I had to hold up things so that the arrest should come off close up to press time—in case of a leakage. You can't help dozens of people knowing when an arrest takes place—the men at the police-station, witnesses, cab-drivers, all sorts of people."

The Superintendent waved his cigar.

"I'm not complaining about that, Silver. What I want to know is how Chinnery let you get ahead of him."

Jimmie blew the ash off his cigarette.

"Now, that's not quite fair. Chinnery would have been in front of me if he'd had the same luck in the first place. You see, your files and those of the New York Police are pretty complete when it comes to the records of criminals. But in this sort of case where someone who is not a criminal is concerned a newspaper man can generally dig out a history quicker than a detective—especially when it has to be done by cable. The *Daily Wire* was looking for a good story; Scotland Yard was looking for a murderer.

"Now, directly the *Wire* got the story of a sister in a comparatively humble position in London we had a direct line of suspicion to follow up—Chinnery might have had a dozen to explore. Here was a motive, anyway, for Mrs. Riley was rich and Mrs.

Westmeon—her only relative by blood—was not. We held up the New York story so far as she was mentioned to go farther into it.

"Having all the details of the Riley marriage, I knew she was lying when I took Chinnery to see her. In the main fact she was right—she and her sister had quarrelled about Riley. But Mrs. Riley had never cut out her sister. Mrs. Westmeon never saw Riley till after the marriage. Then she began to play games, and tried to hook Riley herself. There was the dickens of a bust up, and something leaked out in the American papers. We got some of the stuff over, but, of course, the libel laws being what they are in England, we wouldn't use it. Anyway, after that she became an outsider so far as the Riley *ménage* was concerned. She went back on the stage, and a few years afterwards married Westmeon, who was a sort of music-hall agent.

"I suppose they had the usual vicissitudes of lower grade theatrical folk. They came to England about three months ago. She went into the chorus at the Regal (three pounds a week), and he was head cook and bottle-washer at some little moving picture show.

"What I wanted to know while Chinnery was talking to her was why she was lying. If it was to protect herself it was hardly likely that she would insist on her animus against her sister as she did. She was practically asking to be detained, but Chinnery did not fall into the trap. There were one or two points I thought of—first that for a theatrical woman to be up and fully dressed soon after eight o'clock was peculiar, second that she was in a high state of nervousness, and third that she was fidgety when I moved the curtains to admit more light. There was another person who would have as good a reason as she to commit the murder—her husband."

He paused, and lit a fresh cigarette at the butt of his old one.

"Our early visit had taken her by surprise, and I used my eyes. I noticed a cupboard built into the wall, and I began to understand. Then I got a real piece of luck. I saw a little screw on the floor, and it struck me as the brother of one in an old rook rifle of mine."

"Why didn't you tell Chinnery?" asked the Superintendent.

Jimmie's melancholy face lightened in a laugh.

"What do *you* think? Having him jumping in then and the evening papers get the cream of the story? I had to arrange my beat. Not that it didn't begin to look pretty clear. If there was a rook rifle the person who shot Mrs. Riley could not have been walking. Some constable might have made deductions if a man carried a sporting rifle on his shoulder in the West End.

"But a motor—or another taxi—was different. A rifle could be carried there, and if it drew up beside Mrs. Riley's cab in a block, aim could be taken and a shot fired without a soul being any the wiser. With all this in my mind I made an excuse after we left to go back to Mrs. Westmeon. Her manner when I bluffed helped me, and I got Chinnery to leave a man there while I filled in the gaps.

"It was all pretty easy then. I did most of it by telephone, ringing up every garage I could find in the south-west district till I hit the right one. The man had had a car out every day for a week, and had driven about the West End. The motor people were told he was a detective. You see, he had it all mapped out and calculated that he must hit upon Mrs. Riley sometime. He did—yesterday, and gave his driver orders to follow her cab. He relinquished the pursuit at Piccadilly, and the driver never connected the murder with his fare. I guess Chinnery will have all these ends linked up in the morning."

The Superintendent nodded.

"I think so. We're grateful to you, Silver. But how about the veiled woman?"

Silverdale yawned. "I'm not Sherlock Holmes. Why worry about her? She doesn't come into the story any more."

"She might as easily have been the murderess as not," said the Yard man. "In point of fact, Chinnery and his staff spent more time while you were holding us up yesterday in tracing her out. It was a case of blackmail—a discharged maid of Mrs. Riley's who had got hold of some compromising letters."

"Ah!" Jimmie yawned again and pulled out his watch. "Well, old man, it's three o'clock, and apparently no other paper's got wind of the yarn or they'd have been buzzing round here before now."

"That's why you've been keeping me talking," said the Superintendent with sudden understanding. "Mounting guard over your scoop."

"That's so," said Jimmie wearily. "Good-night, old man."

✣ ✣ ✣

"Gassing Greenly"—an appropriate amusement for enthusiastic gardeners, suggested by Esmond.

: SIMPLE SUMMER SPORTS :

By Lesbia Robinson.

Inexpensive Gambols for the Garden Illustrated by Leading Humorous Artists.

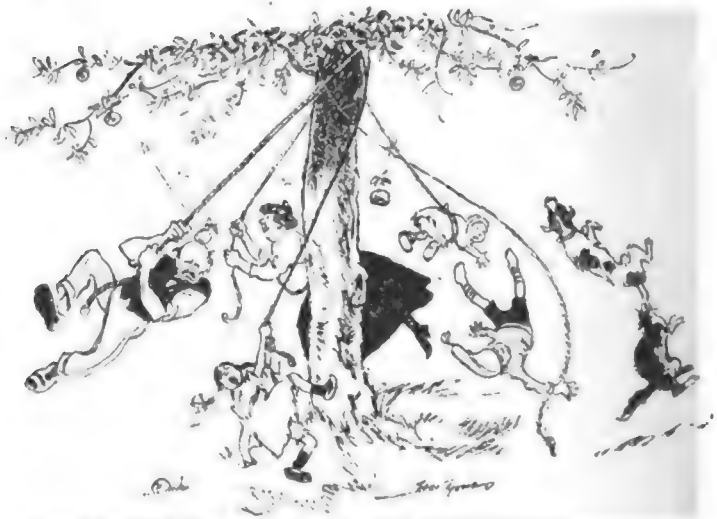
The mention of summer sports conjures up a vision of tennis, boating, and other outdoor attractions, which are not to be indulged in without twinges of conscience regarding the outlay. It seldom occurs to people that many pleasant gambols may be indulged in in their back gardens, which will be beneficial to them and diverting to their neighbours.

Tennis, for instance, besides the subscription, lets you in for heart-rending expenses in the matter of racquet, shoes, and lost balls. Few suburban gardens are big enough to allow of a tennis lawn, but by pooling two gardens and using the fence as a net quite an exciting game may be enjoyed. Your neighbours, of course, supply two players and you the other two; the fact that you can see neither opponents nor the lines of the court, adds an element of excitement not obtained when playing in the orthodox fashion.

Mr. Starr Wood considers that polo might be enjoyed in the garden on a wooden steed propelled by the small son of the house.

The chief disadvantage is that you must leave a great deal to the integrity of your opponents, that is, unless you can persuade some long-suffering friend to sit on the fence and mete out justice to either side. In any case, if you suspect treachery, a hard drive into your neighbour's geranium bed will more than square things.

If you yearn for the joys of sea-bathing and, short of hiding among the milk cans in a luggage van, cannot hope to get within hailing



"Family Jars"—Mr. Bert Thomas is of opinion that a home-made roundabout in the garden would provide plenty of exercise to which young and old alike might participate.

distance of a shrimp, you will find you can get just as wet at home by persuading someone to turn the hose on you. All you have to do, as they say in competitions, is to put on your bathing-dress, trip gracefully on to the lawn, and pretend you are a sunflower waiting to be watered.

"Forking the Murphy"—an exciting outdoor pastime illustrated by Mr. Thomas Henry.

Just one word! Remember in choosing your operator that watering, like pastry making, requires a light hand, and unless you want to be flattened out at the first onslaught, select someone of a mild and obedient disposition. Otherwise the temptation to treat you as a City fire and extinguish you entirely may be too much to be resisted.

A really useful form of recreation which will provide abundant exercise is that of fly and midge hunting. Armed with a shuttlecock, or even a piece of cardboard, the hunter can prance round the garden for hours without exhausting its possibilities. This sport can be indulged in singly or in battalions; in the latter case the winner is he who has most slain to his credit, players to collect their own casualties and inter them decently after they have been counted.

For the benefit of those hardy souls who like a spice of danger in their sport, wasps may be included, one wasp being counted equal to two flies or three midges. If you value your garden it is well to make the flower-beds forbidden ground, lest the excitement of the chase leads to

"Kill That Fly!"—Mr. Alfred Leete portrays a novel diversion which may be made more exciting if extended to wasps and bees.

over, which I'll send to the Blue Cross Fund. It'll be a novel way of paying off our debts of hospitality, too," he concluded complacently.

In due course the hay was cut and the lawn dotted with a generous number of infant hay-cocks. The guests with due respect for their summer frocks, endeavoured to disport themselves in a suitably rural manner; the more youthful pelted one another with handfuls of hay, while their elders drooped in the shelter of the hay-cocks, their tongues all but hanging out with the heat.

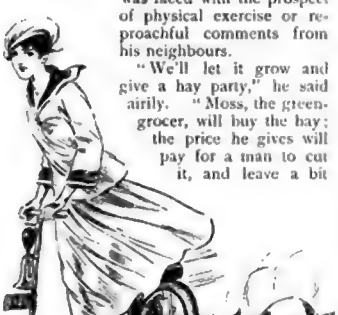
Tea was over, and Mr. Slouch was contemplating the festive scene with the air of a benevolent Lord Mayor when the calamity occurred. Carried away by his self-importance, he flung the match with which he was lighting his cigar into the midst of an adjacent hay-cock. In a moment it was a blazing mass, and the guests were scattering like terrified chickens for safety. As luck would have it the wind blew the flames away from the house, and the prompt efforts of the male guests with hose and buckets, subdued the fire ere it had done more than demolish the whole crop of hay.

But the tragedy of the whole thing lay in the fact that Mr. Slouch, forestalling the greengrocer's payment for the hay, had already sent a cheque to the Blue Cross Fund, and had paid a man good coin of the realm for cutting the hay. And all he had to show for it was a lawn in deep mourning and flower-beds mutilated out of recognition.

trampled geraniums, and badly-aimed blows reduce your pet roses to ghosts of their former selves.

Haymaking is a pleasant diversion which can be carried out in any good-sized garden, and provides an excellent excuse for not cutting the grass. This was the subterfuge resorted to by Mr. Slouch, an indolent gentleman who, unable to afford a gardener, was faced with the prospect of physical exercise or reproachful comments from his neighbours.

"We'll let it grow and give a hay party," he said airily. "Moss, the greengrocer, will buy the hay; the price he gives will pay for a man to cut it, and leave a bit



An Auto-Scooter is the substitute recommended by Mr. Cottington Taylor for the more expensive motor-car.

Nothing could be better for the figure than the garden-roller racing depicted by Mr. Reg. F. Smith.

The SMOKE·UPON·THE·ALTAR

By Gwen Nisbet.

"For it may be, if still we sing
And tend the shrine,
Some deity on wandering wing
May there incline;
And, finding all in order meet,
Stay, while we worship at her feet."

I.

"The stream is too deep for you to wade across just here. I will carry you over if you, of your grace, will permit me, *Ma Hla Hla*," said the young man humbly.

(The name being interpreted, means "Miss Pretty and Fair.")

The unconsciously critical scrutiny of a pair of dark eyes, levelled full upon the speaker, softened on the instant, and an elusive, fleeting smile transfigured the childish dignity and repose of the small face.

"Do you come from Burmah, too?"

She extended a small brown hand with all the graciousness of a queen conferring a priceless favour upon an adoring subject. Undoubtedly this was one accustomed to sovereign power.

"The *Thakinma gelay* (little lady) has guessed rightly. Her servant indeed hails from the Land of Pagodas."

He took the little hand and lifted it reverently to his lips. The action seemed to come naturally to him and was wholly free from gallantry.

Again the fleeting smile.

"But how did you know that I came from Burmah too?" queried the child—for she seemed little more—a faint frown creasing the whiteness of her brow.

"Princess, I heard you speak to your *ayah* in Burmese," responded the man gently.

Then:

"If your Highness will permit me I will carry you over the stream and put you down on the other side in safety. Your Highness' *ayah* is looking for you and I gather that she is anxious," he concluded with a faint smile, as the sound of wailing was borne to them on the breeze.

"I lost my way," said the child with a puzzled frown. "These woods are ever so much thicker than the jungles round Pyinul-win. I am very tired," she added pathetically with a weary little sigh.

But when he would have lifted her in his arms she shrank away.

"I can wade across, surely?" she said, eyeing him and the stream in turn doubtfully. "Is there no other way?"

"There is no other way, Highness," he responded with unvarying gentleness. And at that, with a fretful little sigh, she surrendered and allowed him to take her in his arms and carry her across.

"I don't like living in England one bit," sighed Maxine.

Her eyes sought the countryside, lingered momentarily on the flowery carpet beneath and passed restlessly on to the far horizon.

"Your servant shares your Majesty's sentiments," he said with apparent gaiety, but the youthful face was clouded.

"But you will go back to Burmah, won't you?" she asked, interested.

"The sooner the better," he replied in a tone that was almost curt.

"Why do you want to go back so soon?" pursued Maxine, her dark eyes fixed wonderingly upon his face.

"Because the thing I want most in this world is not for me, and I want to go away and forget it," he responded grimly.

"Are you cross with me for asking?" whispered Maxine, and her dark eyes filled with tears.

"My Princess, no!" he protested, the

smile coming back to his blue eyes. "What a brute I am! There, *Thakinma gelay*, I'm not cross with you. Who could be cross with a Princess? Smile and say you forgive me, sweetheart!"

"There is nothing to forgive," she replied simply, her golden-brown head against his broad shoulder. "*I* am going back to Burmah some day, when I'm quite grown up," she announced proudly.

"Perhaps I shall meet you there," said her cavalier hopefully.

He set her down carefully on the other side of the stream and stood smiling down at her.

The sound of voices had evidently carried, for at this moment out of a clearing in the wood there sauntered a tall, well-made man with tell-tale lines round his eyes that had not been drawn by the pitiless finger of Time. He checked the hail on his lips, seeing that Reggie was not alone, smiling with somewhat cynical amusement. Catching sight of his companion, he stared, whistled softly, and, unperceived, stood gazing at the scene before him as though in half-unwilling admiration.

"Good-bye," observed Her Majesty, extending once more a soft, plump hand to her courtier. "I must run all the way back or *ayah* will scold me for running away from her. I play that I am a Fairy Princess, you know, and those are *my* woods. Anyhow, I suppose I shall be late for tea. That does not matter," said the lady calmly. She smiled at him with the disarming confidence of a child.

"I like you!" she told him seriously, her dark, candid eyes meeting his with trusting friendliness.

He took the little hand once more and bent over it with a courtly homage unusual in so young a man.

"And I," said her unknown cavalier, "shall ever remain Your Majesty's most humble servant."

II.

The beauty of Maxine Egerton was of a kind that no one ever disputes. The brilliant dark eyes, which were equally adorable whether dreamy, melting, or filled with fire, the broad white brow, and the classical beauty of feature which distinguished her, the perfectly chiselled lips and radiant complexion alike enraptured all beholders, from poverty-stricken "Subs" to the lordly Heaven-born of the I.C.S.

Maxine was undoubtedly enjoying a *succès fou*. Although she was only eighteen she possessed none of the awkward shyness of the school-girl, nor the over-independent attitude of many modern young women, and no amount of homage contrived to spoil her natural sweetness of temperament.

At the present time a small frown furrowed the white brow as Maxine arrayed herself in the severely classical garments of ancient Greece. The occasion was an important one—a *café-chantant* of which great things were expected.

It was the April "week" of gaiety in Pyin-ul-win. All Burmah flocked to its chief hill-station to enjoy the welcome coolness of the air, and for a few brief days to forget the plains and the work they had left, in the whirl of dances, gymkhanas, theatricals, and numerous other dissipations. The coming polo matches were the chief topic of conversation in the men's portion of the club.

The ladies were immersed in the study of fashions. New dresses had been arriving by every mail from Home for the past month in preparation for the great occasion. Pyin-ul-win was in a perfect whirl of gaiety.

Undoubtedly the *café-chantant* was a complete success. The local papers could not flatter too highly; no praise was too great. The songs, dances, and choruses were all vigorously encored, and the artists themselves could wish for nothing more.

Perhaps the crowning success of the evening was the tableau of Pygmalion and Galatea. As the curtain rose upon Maxine, standing pale and motionless upon a low pedestal, her exquisite arms bare to the shoulder, her exquisite face raised and expressionless, with a rapt Pygmalion at her feet, a hush fell over the laughing, light-hearted throng. Then the curtain fell, and a storm of applause broke out, surged, and died gradually away.

"Yes," said a man standing quite at the back of the vast hall, under cover of the noise, to the man next him, "that's typical of that young fool Langdale's attitude towards her. He has placed her on a pedestal. One day the idol will fall from its high estate, and lie shattered in pieces. No good ever came of elevating a woman to the place of a goddess. They're as human as the rest of us!"

"Maxine is different," said the boy, sincere adoration in his face, his eyes fixed on the stage as the curtain went up once again. "Jove! How lovely she is, St. Leger! Like an angel!"

The other man smiled cynically.

"Dashed pretty girl," he said casually, and turned away to take a very gay young married woman in to supper. Angels did not interest him apparently.

"Will your Majesty grant her servant the inestimable boon of a dance?"

Maxine looked up with a smile. The cavalier of her childish days stood before her. Six years had passed since they had met in the spring of the world at Home. The years had passed lightly over the head of Reggie Langdale; save for the addition of a humorous wrinkle at the corners of his blue eyes, he was unchanged.

They had met, as he had prophesied, when Maxine had made her *début* in the flowery land beloved of her heart.

"I have kept you three, Reggie," she said, smiling a gay welcome. "And I hope you realise your good luck. Major Manners said that, as your superior officer, he was entitled to all of them, and I had great difficulty in retaining them at all!"

"The brute!" said Reggie, with inconsequent geniality and a twinkle in his eye. "Thank you, Princess, for fighting my battles for me. I fear your servant is but a scurvy knave, and unworthy of the honours you bestow upon him!"

They laughed together like children at time-honoured jokes, knowing no fatigue, and then were silent while they danced to the perfect strains of the military band. Maxine never liked to talk while she was dancing. She danced perfectly, and gave her whole soul up to the enjoyment of the moment. Reggie always respected her wishes. Indeed, he was content to be near her, and had no wish to spoil the perfect moment by inconsequent chatter.

Later, when they were resting in a sitting-out place, Reggie remained so silent that Maxine asked him if there was anything the matter. For answer, he stretched out his hand and took her white-gloved one in his own. She suffered it to remain in his clasp, smiling faintly the while, though she said nothing.

"Princess," said Reggie, who seemed to find speech an unusual difficulty to-night, "Princess, take off your glove."

"No, Cavalier of the Forest," said Maxine in a low voice that was not quite steady. "I cannot do that."

"Why not?" asked Reggie with apparent surprise. He turned his head, and looked full at her.

Maxine was silent through sheer inability to reply.

"I want to hold your hand," whispered Reggie. "Why won't you take it off, sweetheart?"

"For that reason," said Maxine calmly, though her heart beat with heavy pounding thuds. "Because you could not bear it, Reggie!"

"Well?" said Reggie. He was still looking at her, with a curious, searching regard.

"That's all!" said Maxine with trembling dignity.

"Oh, is that all?" said Reggie. His voice held almost a drawl. "Well, it doesn't make much difference, one way or another, does it? Because, you see, I shall have to get used to it sometime—and so will you."

At the back of his lazy blue eyes a blue flame sprang up, and seemed to mock her. Instinctively she shrank away before it. Her eyes sought the silvered blue-grey hills on the distant horizon. Reggie was speaking again.

"Well, dear," she heard him say, "when are you going to make up your mind to marry me? Because it will have to be done sometime, you know. And you're only wasting time."

The sudden shock of his words acted like a douche of cold water on Maxine's tottering self-control. Instantly she recovered her self-possession, and became freezingly aloof.

"I am—not—going—to marry—you—at all!" she said with icy distinctness and proud composure.

"No, really?" said Reggie. His blue eyes flashed with a mocking light. "I'm glad that you understand me so well, Maxine. It saves such a lot of trouble, don't you know. Now we can get on with things a bit——"

There was a moment's tense silence like the stilly thunderous calm before a storm. Then as he turned to her again, the blue devil in his eyes mocked her for a brief instant before he raised her to her feet, and holding her in his arms, kissed her on the mouth with a fierce passion that shook them both.

"You're mine!" he said very quietly, almost under his breath, as one who holds himself harshly in restraint. "You belong to me—you always have belonged to me, since the very beginning of all things. I know, of course," said Reggie with unwonted humility, "that I'm not half good enough for you, Princess. There isn't a man breathing who could be. But for all that you're mine, Maxine, and I'm yours, for ever and ever. And I'm here, now and always, just to do what you want, and nothing else in the world!"

He raised her little hand to his lips and kissed it, but she resisted him with both her hands against his breast, pushing him from her with all her strength. Her eyes held something that looked like fear.

"What are you afraid of?" he asked her whimsically. "What's worrying you? Are you trying to fight against Fate, Maxine? Because if you are, I warn you, you'll get beaten, sweetheart!"

She raised her eyes tremulously to his. Her face was very pale.

"Are you quite—*quite* sure," panted Maxine, "that you care for me, really—*really* and not still for the girl—you used to be engaged to—long ago?"

A dull red surged up to Reggie's temples. For a moment his hold on her relaxed. He did not respond immediately.

Then:

"Oh, is that it?" he said abruptly, with a short laugh. "I thought there was something. Yes, dear, I am—quite—sure."

Maxine said no more, and in a moment he was himself again. His inexpressibly gay laugh rang out challengingly once more as his arms tightened about her, and he turned her face to his.

Nevertheless with the quick eyes of love she saw that his blue eyes were clouded.

III.

Maxine was entertaining her bosom friend and confidant to tea, and extolling Reggie and all his works.

"I quite agree," laughed the other girl. "Reggie's a paragon of all the virtues. In fact, it's quite a case of

"'I could not love thee, dear, so much, loved I not honour more!'"

"Reggie loves me more than his honour," said Maxine in a low voice, "and I would not marry him if that were not so. That's the only true test of love. There is none other. All men say that they love their wives next to their honour, but which of them is capable of the supreme unselfishness when honour is sacrificed on the altar of Love? There is no sacrifice too great for Love in Love's eyes."

She spoke passionately, and with such unusual vehemence that her friend was taken totally by sur-

He raised her to her feet, and holding her in his arms, kissed her on the mouth with a fierce passion that shook them both.

prise. She cast about her for means of stemming the torrent.

"Well, well, Maxine," she said soothingly, laying her hand affectionately upon the girl's arm. "It is not given to all of us to have a *grande passion*, and to find our soul mate and affinity as you have done."

She paused, and added incredulously: "Aren't you just a little bit afraid for your ideals? No man is more than human. You exact absolute surrender——"

"As I give!" interpolated Maxine with flashing eyes.

"So you mean to say that you also would sacrifice honour for the man you love did occasion demand?"

Maxine opened her eyes wide.

"Of course," she said simply.

Presently, at the cyclonic advent of Reggie, who, his work over for the day, came tearing up the drive on his favourite water, Maxine's friend took her leave and left the lovers together. For some time they discussed the wedding arrangements and their future plans.

"I say, darling," said Reggie, "I must ask old St. Leger to be my best man. We were at school together, you know, and were gazetted to the same regiment afterwards. A good chap, St. Leger!"

Maxine's eyebrows drew together in a small frown. She had no liking for Captain St. Leger. Instinctively she distrusted him. Also he had proposed to her on the evening of the *café chantant*, and she had refused him with such a cold little air of virginal, remote aloofness, that the man's eyes had glowed momentarily, though in expression his humble acceptance of her decision was all that a rejected lover's demeanour should be. To do Reggie justice, he had no idea that his friend was an erstwhile rival.

Maxine debated within herself whether to tell Reggie or not, but she finally decided against doing so. A rejected proposal is nobody's business save that of the two most intimately concerned, and Maxine's notions of the proprieties were rigid. So Reggie was not told, and Captain St. Leger was duly required to "fill the bill," as Reggie expressed it, of best man at their wedding.

What Maxine, however, did not take into consideration was that the fact of a woman being the wife of his neighbour deterred the gallant captain not at all. "All's fair in love and war, and any woman fair game" was doubtless his motto, and the sporting risks entertained enhanced the value of the prize. Nevertheless, no open scandal had ever attached itself to his name.

Captain St. Leger was what is known as a very dark horse indeed.

Maxine and Reggie were married, and the entire station turned out in all the glory of its best clothes to attend the wedding. Maxine looked rather pale, but her exquisite beauty was heightened by the wonderful light in her dark eyes whenever they rested on her husband. As for Reggie he bore himself like a conqueror, and there was nothing to denote the proverbially nervous bridegroom in the triumphant demeanour with which he strode up the aisle. He never took his eyes off Maxine.

"Jove!" said the man who had criticised Maxine on a previous occasion, the redoubtable St. Leger, "she's lovely enough to keep him, even if she *does* tumble off her pedestal; that is, provided she doesn't go off; that type soon fades. Well, old chap," —this to Reggie—"good luck to you both; I hope you'll be happy. One never knows!"

The smile of complete assurance in Reggie's blue eyes baffled him.

"Thanks, old man," he replied lightly. "*Don't you worry.*"

"Oh, I don't, I assure you!" smiled the other.

After the reception, Maxine and Reggie went away, amidst showers of rice, rose-leaves, and laughing farewells. Reggie's leave was due, and the young couple were proceeding straight home, after a brief honeymoon, which was to be spent in the hills. As Maxine said, "We've got all our lives together, but Reggie's leave at home only lasts a year, so we won't spend very long honeymooning in *this* country." The inference was obvious to the dullest intellect that Reggie and Maxine intended to go honeymooning all their lives.

They took a house in the country, and time passed lightly, while they were blissfully unconscious of the fact, roaming the woods where first they met and discussing the dim, sweet past and the glowing, glorious future. The present was golden; nothing marred the happy serenity of the fleeting days. So the weeks passed.

IV.

Reggie was busy compiling notes for a book on "The Aboriginal Hill Tribes of India and Burmah" when his friend, Captain —now Major—St. Leger, home on leave, called to see him and incidentally to congratulate his wife on the charming taste displayed in the artistic decoration of her new house. Reggie was delighted to see him, and his half-wistful air towards Maxine, as of one not sure of his welcome, caused her to relent in her judgment of him and to accord him a welcome of a heartiness only second to Reggie's own.

"Why, St. Leger, old man!" cried Reggie, clapping him on the shoulder, "you're the very chap I want to help me, with your all-embracing knowledge of hill-folk and their heathen customs! Come and stay with us for a bit. Our leave's up very shortly—unless war actually is declared—and I want to get the thing finished before I go. Come, now, say you will! We'll be delighted to have you—eh, Maxine?"

Major St. Leger hesitated, expressed polite fears regarding his own powers of entertainment, quoted the maxim which remarks that two is company, hinted that he would prove an uninteresting guest, and finally allowed himself reluctantly to be persuaded.

The week passed, and another, and Major St. Leger was still established at "Rosebrake."

"He's such a good-natured chap," Reggie was wont to declare, "spending his precious leave down here with us, just for the sake of helping a pal, when all the time he's so much in request everywhere in town. He's one of the very best, old St. Leger!"

So time passed, and Maxine had forgotten that she ever disliked the man who proved himself so charming a guest and so indispensable a help to Reggie in his all-engrossing work.

On August 4th, 1914, the book was completed. St. Leger and Reggie had remained closeted together in the library all day, and it was with the satisfied air of men who have achieved their end that they sat down to dinner in the evening. St. Leger was in his gayest and most light-hearted mood and kept them both laughing throughout the meal. The evening was hot and oppressive, with a suggestion of thunder in the air which foretold a coming storm. After the meal was over Maxine caught up a light wrap and wandered out into the garden with her guest. Reggie remained indoors to finish his cigar.

For some time they sauntered along aimlessly, chatting in a desultory fashion. Then, when they were out of sight of the house:

"Mrs. Langdale," said Major St. Leger, "I have something to say to you. Will you come to the summer-house?"

She assented idly, wondering at the strangeness of his manner. Inside the rustic bower that Reggie had built with his own capable hands, she turned to her companion with something more than mere curiosity. For a few brief moments he was silent; then, removing his cigar from his mouth, he blew a cloud of smoke into the air, turned to her, and spoke.

"Do you remember ever hearing, Mrs. Langdale, that Reggie was engaged when he first met you?" said Major St. Leger.

He leant forward and spoke in low tones with emphasis, watching her face the while.

Maxine's eyes dilated. She caught her breath and grew crimson as her own roses that nodded beside the doorway. Swiftly she rose and stood facing him. Unutterable scorn lay deep in her eyes. Her voice, though low, cut like a lash.

"*How—dare—you!*" she breathed.

The concentrated contempt in her voice might have touched him, but if he were conscious of it he showed no sign of discomfiture. His eyes contemplated her coolly.

"I have proofs," he said, tapping his breast pocket, "a letter. She heard of his marriage and wrote to me. Listen!"

Maxine grew pale and swayed as if about to fall.

"If this is true, why have you kept the secret until now? Why have you told me?" she said contemptuously. "Is it money you want?"

He leant towards her with the same curious little smile that had twitched his lips on the day that Maxine and Reggie had become engaged.

"Ah! *Now*, Mrs. Langdale," said Major St. Leger, "*now*—we will come to terms!"

Ten minutes later, Reggie, disconsolately bearing a telegram which summoned him to report himself immediately at headquarters with a view to departing to France with the first contingent of the British Expeditionary Force, went out into the garden to break the news to Maxine.

Led by the sound of voices he reached the summer-house. The window was open, and his glance passed through it and fell on the two people within. The next instant he stifled an almost irresistible impulse to cry out.

By the light of the full moon Reggie, with his own unbelieving eyes, saw Maxine sway uncertainly towards St. Leger, saw the savage exultation in his eyes, heard the half-sob that caught her breath in her throat as the man's arms went round her, drawing her to him in a fierce, close embrace—nearer—nearer—till their lips met in one long, long kiss.

For ten seconds that were an eternity, Reggie stood as if turned to stone. Then, very quietly, he laid his hand upon the handle of the door, turned it, and walked in.

V.

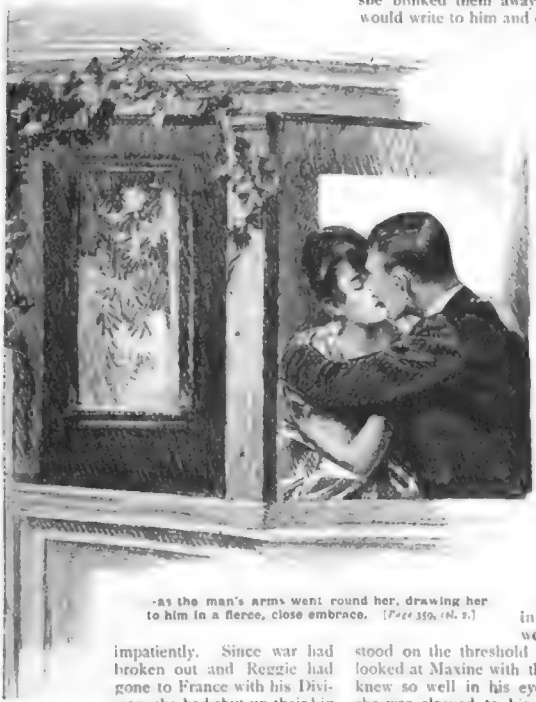
Maxine went about her housework with a troubled face. Black rings encircled her eyes, and she looked as though she had not slept at all the previous night. She sighed and regarded her roughened hands

Reggie, with his own unbelieving eyes, saw Maxine sway uncertainly towards St. Leger . . . . heard the half-sob that caught her breath in her throat—

"Oh, Reggie, Reggie!" sighed Maxine.

The tears sprang to her eyes unbidden, but she blinked them away determinedly. She would write to him and explain everything—everything that St. Leger had revealed to her—the story of Reggie's mad, youthful infatuation, how he had betrayed a trust for the sake of the girl who had subsequently discarded him; of the discovery of the theft by St. Leger and his threat to reveal it. And she—Maxine—would tell Reggie how she had bought the promise of secrecy from him—at a price—his own price! Maxine shuddered. She could feel the touch of his lips now. Oh! if only Reggie would understand. . .

"Reggie, *Reggie!*" cried Maxine.



-as the man's arms went round her, drawing her to him in a fierce, close embrace. [Page 359, col. 2.]

It was an evening in late summer, some weeks later. Reggie stood on the threshold of the tiny flat and looked at Maxine with the old look that she knew so well in his eyes. A moment, and she was clasped to his breast, sobbing over an empty sleeve.

"My poor boy!" sobbed Maxine passionately, and clung to him closely.

"My Princess!" said Reggie. His deep voice was unusually husky, though his blue eyes held a most reassuring twinkle.

"Can you ever forgive me, Reggie?" asked Maxine through her tears. They were falling fast now, like summer rain, but there was no bitterness in them. A great peace possessed her. "You got my letter?"

"I got your letter, sweetheart," said the man grimly. His hand was clenched, and he spoke through his teeth. The light in the blue eyes was extraordinarily hard. It glinted like new steel.

"And you believed that scoundrel, Maxine?" he said gently.

Maxine raised her head for the first time.

impatiently. Since war had broken out and Reggie had gone to France with his Division, she had shut up their big house in the country and taken instead a tiny flat in town, doing all the cooking and housework herself. This step was by no means a necessary one, but it kept her thoughts occupied. Maxine was grateful for anything that could do this in these black days.

Reggie had gone—on the day after the one whose memory caused Maxine to shudder. He had asked for no explanation, and she had vouchsafed none. St. Leger had disappeared. Maxine had not set eyes on him since.

What had passed between the two men on that fatal night she did not know, but early the next morning St. Leger had left the house like a whipped cur, and had since wholly disappeared. The thought of him made her shiver. If only Reggie had not taken it so for granted that she was faithless. . . .

A wonderful light of hope shone in her eyes and illuminated her whole face.

"Wasn't it—true?" she breathed.

Reggie said nothing at all.

He took her chin in his hand and tilted her face upwards, looking deep into her eyes.

Something she read there must have reassured Maxine, for a gladness came into her face that had not been there for many weary weeks. Her heart beat quickly.

"Oh, Reggie, forgive me!" she said impulsively, and he answered her in the words she had used long ago in the woods, when first they had met.

"There is nothing to forgive—sweetheart. It is I who must ask your forgiveness for doubting you."

"How could you help it?" whispered Maxine penitently. "He threatened to expose you, Reggie—unless——"

"Unless you paid the price he asked. And that was *all* that he wanted—a kiss, Maxine?" said Reggie grimly.

Maxine's head drooped forward till her face was hidden on his breast.

"That was not—*all*—that he asked, Reggie," she said almost inaudibly.

Reggie's hand clenched again. When he spoke it was with a palpable effort.

"But you wouldn't have—paid the price, Maxine?" he asked hoarsely, imploringly. "Believing that I was guilty, you wouldn't have—paid—the whole?"

"To the uttermost farthing, Reggie," she said softly, with a curious thrill in the inflection of her voice. Her eyes shone with a steady light. "To save you from disgrace, dear!"

A great sob burst from Reggie that shook his whole frame.

"Oh, Maxine, Maxine!" he cried brokenly. "Don't—don't love me so much! I don't deserve it, dear—I don't—deserve it—little Maxine——"

He laid his head down on her shoulder and was very still.

Maxine's expression changed. A little tender smile flitted across her face. Very gently, with infinite tenderness, she bent her head and touched the fair wavy hair with her lips.

Presently he raised his head.

"Listen, Maxine. I'll tell you what I've never told a living soul before. The girl I was engaged to when I first met you—at Home, in the woods—was in debt. She came to me for help. At the time St. Leger and I held jointly a position of trust—we two were the sole trustees. I thought myself very much in love at the time. She asked me to betray the trust and help her—pay her debts—and I refused. She threw me over. I went back to India with the regiment, and St. Leger was left sole guardian of the trust and the money.

"No sooner had I arrived in India—with St. Leger left at home still on leave—than I heard Maisie had paid off all her debts. And so she had. Her debts were paid, Maxine, but not by me. St. Leger paid them with the old chap's money. He was in love with her himself at the time. However, she paid him in his own coin, for as soon as the debts were paid up she threw him over. After what happened that night I thought he'd be equal to any deviltry, and I taxed him with it. He confessed that I'd been the one whom people had suspected, because it was known that Maisie and I were engaged. Nothing could be proved. He was in a mortal funk that night, and he confessed that he had taken the money for her; but he didn't say why you'd kissed him, Maxine, and I wasn't going to ask him, the swine."

"Oh, Reggie!" sighed Maxine despairingly. "How on earth could I ever have believed it? I did—that—for your sake, because he threatened to expose you, and the proofs seemed so irrefutable, and I cared more for you than life itself, Reggie."

"Or your own honour," supplemented her husband. "Now, darling, let's get away from here, down to our little place in the country. My own girl, don't fret so. I assure you I'm perfectly happy, if the losing of an arm was all that was needed to bring us together again."

* * * * *

"The stream is too deep for you to wade across; I will carry you over if you, of your grace, will permit me, *Ma Hla Hla!*" said Reggie humbly, though his blue eyes twinkled.

"Do *you* come from Burmah, too?"

Reggie seized the hand that had been with dignity extended to him, and pulling the owner thereof to him, kissed her till she pushed him away and escaped, blushing rosily.

"That wasn't in the game," she protested, laughing.

"No," said Reggie, "but we're making up for lost time now, eh, sweetheart?"

They wandered away happily together, like light-hearted children, hand-in-hand.

And even Major St. Leger was forced to own himself wrong in his calculations, when, with characteristic effrontery, he called a few days later with his bride (*née* Miss Maisie Musgrave), and surprised Reggie surreptitiously kissing his wife's roughened hand behind the shelter of a doorway. Obviously, the pedestal of Reggie's heart was still occupied—by his wife.

"A SHILLING, PLEASE!"

Photo Ellis Martin.

Miss Gladys Cooper (Mrs. Herbert Buckmaster) who pleads the cause of the children below, with her own little son and daughter.

Miss Gladys Cooper, the beautiful young actress, who in private life is Mrs. Herbert Buckmaster, has very kindly consented to appeal this year in the ROYAL on behalf of the Fresh Air Fund—the Children's Charity. It exists, as most readers of the ROYAL know, to send City children to the country in the summer time. A shilling pays for a day's holiday for one child, £10 10s. pays for a party of 200, with necessary attendants, and 12s. 6d. sends a child to the country for a fortnight. All working expenses are borne by the promoters, and the whole of the money subscribed directly benefits the children. Please send subscriptions to the Hon. Sec. F.A.F., care of THE ROYAL MAGAZINE, 18 Henrietta Street, London, W.C.—Ed. R.M.

I HAVE just been spending a glorious day on the beach with my two kiddies, Joan and baby John, and haven't we just enjoyed it! Joan, who is nearly six, is very motherly, and endured her small brother's destruction of her sand-pies with Spartan resignation, though she was unfeignedly glad when he was whisked off by Nurse for a nap.

Of course, we had lunch on the sands. John Rodney drank his milk like an angel, and felt quite a man because he was made sole custodian of a full-size sponge-cake. Joan ate her rations, as it were, on the march, dropped her sandwiches in her pail, and had a sporting time chasing a hard-boiled egg down the shelving beach.

It was Joan's plea for "another beautiful day on the beach to-morrow" that set me thinking what a lot a day spent out of doors, with picnic meals and plenty of space, means to a child. Even my own little ones, who get their full share of treats, enjoy it thoroughly, and it would mean Paradise to the poor little souls whose lives are spent in dismal streets, where fresh air and cool breezes are almost unknown.

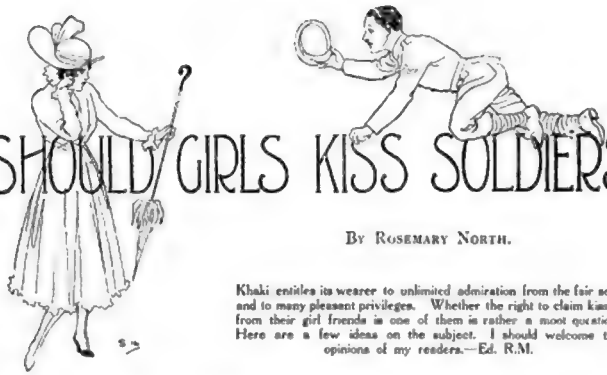
These kiddies haven't even a garden to play in—only hot pavements or perhaps a dingy backyard. They have hardly a nodding acquaintance with flowers, and they *do* love them so. Turn them loose in the fields to pick buttercups and meadowsweet, and they'd ask nothing more of life.

That's where I want you to help me. For every shilling you send to the Fresh Air Fund one poor kiddie will have a long day in the country, with soft grass under-foot, the birds singing overhead, and an armful of flowers to take back to his people at home.

That one glimpse into fairyland will sweeten all the sultry days to come. Fairyland is waiting, but we want good fairies to open its door.

The key to fairyland is a silver shilling! Won't you be a good fairy and send one?

Gladys Cooper



SHOULD GIRLS KISS SOLDIERS?

By Rosemary North.

Khaki entitles its wearer to unlimited admiration from the fair sex, and to many pleasant privileges. Whether the right to claim kisses from their girl friends is one of them is rather a moot question. Here are a few ideas on the subject. I should welcome the opinions of my readers.—Ed. R.M.

Soldiers are, of course, a privileged class, but there still exists in the minds of many maidens uncertainty as to how far conventions should be swept aside in their relations with the British Army. To such girls the question of the propriety of kissing soldiers outside the family pale gives food for much meditation.

No one would advocate promiscuous kissing, though it would be an affecting sight to see Miss Tillie Tiptoe holding up the traffic in the Strand while she embraced khaki-clad warriors, not singly but in battalions. But if a soldier of her acquaintance about to leave for the Front shows signs of feeling affectionate, there seems no legitimate reason why she should deny him the kiss that cheers.

As a rule it is only near male relatives who are suffered to levy toll on the lips of maidens, but the khaki kiss is, or should be, a thing apart, born neither of love nor duty, but of gratitude and pride, a recognition by the girl of the danger and hardships which the man is prepared to face.

Of course, it all depends on the spirit in which the kiss is given. Some girls shed kisses as freely as a tree sheds its leaves, and the British Army, always polite, would probably be the last to discourage them. To such girls the problem of to kiss or not to kiss will never present itself—they kiss as freely as they powder their noses, and with as little unconcern. It is the girls to whom a kiss means something who will hesitate before breaking through the barrier of convention, and yielding to the embrace of amorous warriors.

Look at it like this! At present there is no happy compromise between a handshake and a kiss. A girl shakes hands with mere acquaintances, with business friends, with people she has never seen before and hopes never to see again: is she to bestow the same form of greeting or farewell on men to whom her whole heart goes out in admiration? A handshake is a formal affair, and there is no room for formality in the lives of men who are going to look death in the face, to slip perhaps over the borderland, where the going may be a little easier because of a remembered kiss.

There is, of course, a danger of misunderstanding on both sides. The soldier may attribute undue importance to what is merely an act of pride and gratitude; the

A maiden's kisses do not, as a rule, go out of the family, but are confined to uncles and other near male relatives.

Some misguided girls still consider a soldier as a sort of superior Pekingese, to be paraded, and treated to the fluffiest of conversation.

girl, on the other hand, may imagine a lover-like intention where nothing of the kind was intended. But, for the most part, both kisser and "kissee" will interpret the affair correctly, will refrain from setting a false value upon it, and will recognise it as the outcome of exceptional circumstances for which no other solution is quite adequate.

It is not, perhaps, the kiss itself so much as what it expresses, that lies behind the desire of the man in khaki, for, after all, a kiss is a fleeting thing, and it is only the remembrance that lingers. But for the soldier, leaving all the soft, feminine side of life, separated, perhaps, from his own womenfolk whose kisses would have cheered and strengthened him, it is not unnatural that he should turn to those others near at hand who have shown him kindness and consideration. The girl who kisses a soldier is kissing him not necessarily for herself, but as the representative of his own dear ones and all the women whom he is going forth to defend.

The soldier away from home or at home on leave is a child at heart. He wants someone to mother him, and so there is a good deal of the maternal in the attitude of girls just now. A few, of course, still consider a soldier as a sort of superior Pekingese, to be paraded and treated to fluffy conversation more suited to the brain of a haddock than that of an intelligent man.

But behind the attitude of most girls there is something deeper and more worthy, a desire not only to amuse, but to "mother" and minister to the men in khaki. For the khaki does and must make a difference; it is the badge of manliness, and it has opened the door to many pleasant intimacies undreamt of before the war. A few years ago it would have been thought the height of impropriety for a girl to write and send parcels to a strange man; now every girl has her lonely soldier in camp or at the Front. Formality has been dispensed with in this direction. Cannot we, for the duration of the war, allow a little latitude in the matter of kissing?

There may conceivably be men even in the British Army who would take advantage of a girl's willingness to meet them in the matter of kisses. But because some are unworthy is that any reason why the others should go unkissed? There are few sensible-minded girls who cannot distinguish between a request born of frivolous motives and one made sincerely and backed up by genuine friendship. There is no compulsion in kissing—the granting or withholding lies in her own hands. The modern girl is a discerning young person, and quite capable of dealing with undeserving applicants for her favour.

And if a girl did kiss a man who proved

A few years ago it would have been thought the height of impropriety for a girl to write and send parcels to a strange man.

unworthy, well, there is no great harm done. Many of the womenfolk for whom our men are fighting and dying are unworthy the sacrifice, but they did not hesitate to defend them on that account. And if they can risk their lives, not counting the cost, surely a girl can risk bestowing a kiss on a soldier who may possibly be unworthy, but is far more likely to deserve the highest mark of favour she can bestow upon him?

Granted that kissing is permissible, it should, like spirituous liquors, be indulged in only in moderation, and to mark some untoward event. It is not necessary or indeed seemly for a girl to shower embraces on every soldier-man that is within her gates, or to include the billet in her morning and evening salutes to the family, persuasive though his arguments may be. But when he is going away it were surely churlish to refuse so little a thing to one who is giving all for his country?

It is always possible that he may come back maimed and broken, to a life shorn of pleasant frivolities. Is it any wonder that he should want to cram in all he can of pleasure and sentiment ere he turns his back on it for ever? At the best he is going to a life of hardship where the only elements of tenderness are the memories he carries into it. And if the memory of a kiss will serve to cheer and hearten him, to remind him that the women at home are with him to the uttermost, what girl could find it in her heart to refuse?

Again, there is the possibility he may not come back at all, that he may be among the glorious company of those who have "gone West" for the sake of King and country. The girl who refuses a kiss may find, too late, that she has refused a hero's last request, and foregone the honour of being the last to kiss a soldier who died fighting for the faith that was in him.

There are people who will say that kisses are sacred, and not to be given lightly. But human lives are sacred and not to be risked lightly; yet our soldiers are risking them on the battlefields of Europe with a glorious disregard of danger which should inspire us to give bountifully, with full hands and hearts, the little all which lies within our power.

Of course, if a girl is engaged it puts a different complexion on the matter, but it may be assumed that her *fiancé* is in khaki, and she is fulfilling the law of supply and demand with regard to kisses for the Army. But the unappropriated damsel, though she has not a soldier lover, may have soldier pals, who, for the sake of the good times they have had together, the lone grey days yet to be lived through, will beg the favour of a kiss. And the girl who gives it will be sacrificing none of her modesty if she yields this tribute to the man who takes his life in his hand that England and England's womanhood may be inviolate.

If the memory of a kiss will serve to cheer and hearten a gallant soldier, what girl could find it in her heart to refuse?

PICTURE PARAGRAPHS

The Editor will be Pleased to Purchase Photographs of an Interesting and Out-of-the-Way Nature. All Photographs should be Accompanied by a Short Description.

Photo J. Standish.

A clip of cartridges which stopped a German bullet, and probably saved the life of the soldier whose belt they were in.

FOILING THE SNIPER.

It is not often that cartridges intended for the enemy save a soldier's life before he has even fired them, but this is what happened in the case of a Leeds soldier whilst on active service in Flanders.

A bullet, fired by a German sniper at a soldier whose cap appeared above the parapet, missed its mark, struck a sandbag, and glanced off, hitting a clip of cartridges in the belt of a man from Leeds. This particular clip was in the fifth pouch of the belt, and probably saved its owner's life.

Curiously enough, the shock produced by the impact of the bullet was not noticed by the soldier wearing the belt, and the German souvenir was not discovered until some time after its intrusion.

Happily, there have been a good many miraculous escapes of this sort, and it is pretty certain that this particular clip of cartridges will be highly prized by the fortunate soldier whose life they probably saved. Certainly they are a very interesting war relic.

THE BOYS IN BLUE.

"Tommies" are always cheerful patients, and once on the road to convalescence they are ever ready for any form of entertainment that offers. If no outside volunteers appear to sing and play for them, they are quite capable of entertaining themselves, especially if there is a stray banjo or other instrument about.

One enterprising soldier, not to be outdone, has requisitioned a crutch with which he pretends to emulate the performance of his comrade with the banjo.

Magazines are tremendously popular for whiling away stray half-hours, and the lad in the foremost bed has evidently been interrupted in reading the January Royal, in order to have his photograph taken. His comrade at the foot of the bed is also jealously guarding a magazine, for the demand often exceeds the supply; so don't forget to pass this copy on, will you?

Photo Pte. Caldwell.

Here is a happy group of convalescent soldiers, who are passing the time cheerily with music and the Royal Magazine.

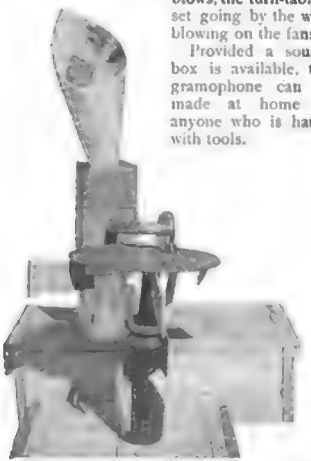
Soldiers are always ready for any form of sport. Here they are seen in the start of the great cross country race at Gosforth Park, when over 2,000 soldiers took part.

A WIND GRAMOPHONE.

THIS gramophone is made with a bottle and the lid of a baking powder tin, which revolves on the bottle's neck. The turn-table is fixed on two pieces of wood, and has four fans made of stout cardboard tied to it.

The sound comes through a paper funnel inserted in a hole made in the top of a paraffin tin. In another hole the soundbox of an old gramophone is fixed, and when the wind blows, the turn-table is set going by the wind blowing on the fans.

Provided a soundbox is available, this gramophone can be made at home by anyone who is handy with tools.

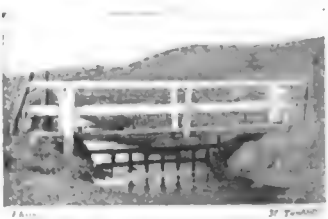


This gramophone, driven by wind, can be made at home with the aid of a sound-box from a disused gramophone.

A MAMMOTH RACE.

Two thousand competitors in a single race is a pretty large number, but well over two thousand soldiers took part in the great cross country race at Gosforth Park recently.

The start was a remarkable sight, and those who emerged victorious had every reason to congratulate themselves. To win an ordinary race is a distinction, but to come out victor over hundreds of others is a great achievement.



This bridge has the distinction of joining two counties, Cumberland and Northumberland, each end being in a different county.

A BOUNDARY BRIDGE.

THIS unpretentious wooden bridge is remarkable because it links up two counties, one end being in Cumberland and the other in Northumberland. It is closed at each end by gates opening outwards in order to keep sheep from crossing.

The bridge is painted white, so that it can be easily seen in the dark, and has a sheep-catcher to catch sheep washed away by sudden floods, which are not uncommon in that district during rainy weather.

A QUEER STEED.

THE cowboy's love of sport is proverbial, and this photograph, which was taken on a ranch in the far West, shows one of these men of the plains riding a bull. This is a sport frequently indulged in by cowboys. A young animal is selected, captured, and roughly harnessed. The instant he is let loose a cowboy leaps upon his back, and away he rushes. Finding the load still on his back, he commences a series of very jerky springs into the air.

Riding "bull-back" is a favourite sport among cowboys. Here a bull is seen springing into the air in an endeavour to shake off his burden.

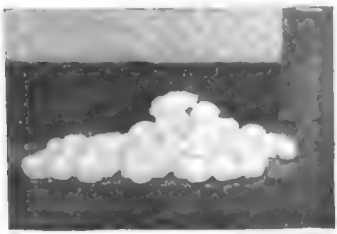
This sort of thing is quite to his rider's taste, and the more he jumps the more he is encouraged to do so. Whereupon the bull sees that different tactics are necessary, and he sticks his fore-feet firmly into the ground and throws his hind legs up in the air like a buck-jumping horse.

This is usually the finish of the performance, as, unless the rider is an expert and used to breaking in horses, he finds it practically impossible to remain in the saddle.

MONSTER HAIL-STONES.

THESE monster hail-stones were photographed half-an-hour after a very heavy hail-storm in South Africa, which did a great deal of damage to stock and property.

The stones struck the galvanised-iron roof of a house with such force as to dent it in several places.

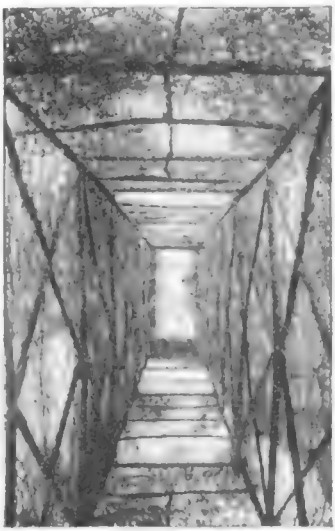


These huge hailstones fell during a storm in South Africa, with such force as to dent a galvanised-iron roof and break several windows.

THE ROYAL MAGAZINE.

"SOME" FLOOD.

THE Thames floods were responsible for turning this beautiful rose-walk into a temporary canal, since the river invaded the garden to such an extent that the path was utterly submerged for some time.



This mysterious looking picture is in reality nothing more remarkable than a rose-walk which was invaded by the river during the Thames floods.

For "Soldiers and Sailors Too"

All the contributions on this page were sent in by officers and men serving in H.M. Forces. A pack of ROYAL playing-cards or a silver pencil-case is given for every accepted storyette, joke, bit of verse, or drawing sent in by a sailor or soldier. Please say which gift you prefer, and address envelopes to The O.C., ROYAL MAGAZINE, 18 Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

TIT FOR TAT.

The Adjutant of the Depot was a man who always had a smile on his face, whether serious or otherwise. One morning he was inspecting a batch of recruits, and seeing a man who had obviously not shaved that morning, went up to him and said:

"Ha, ha! no shave this morning!" To which the recruit immediately replied:

"Hee, hee! no razor!"

STEPPING IT OUT.

A cyclist, who was out on night patrol work, was pushing his bicycle owing to the road being very muddy and slippery.

Trudging along, thinking of blazing fires and warm blankets, he suddenly heard someone coming towards him.

"Who are you?" he called out.

"A West Riding," came the reply. "Who are you?"

"Oh! I'm a cyclist walking," was the answer.

ONE AT A TIME.

A party of recruits were recently being put through their first riding course. One of the party was mounted on a rather frisky mule, and after a good deal of bucking and rearing the animal managed to get its hind hoof through the stirrup. The recruit became greatly alarmed, and was heard to exclaim:

"By gum, Neddy, if you are going to get up, I'm going to get off!"

The Tommy trenchward treks his tiring track,
A warehouse perched upon his aching back.

THE CAP FITTED.

She was a sweet young thing, and having come down to see her soldier brother, who happened to be on duty when she arrived, she was taken round the camp by his chum. She was, of course, full of questions.

"Who is that person?" she asked, pointing to a Colour-Sergeant.

"Oh, he shook hands with the King, and that is why he is wearing a crown on his arm," replied the "truthful" man.

"And who is that?" she asked, seeing a gymnastic instructor with crossed Indian clubs on his uniform.

"That is the barber. Do you see the scissors on his arm?"

Seeing yet another man with cuffs decorated with stars, she asked:

"And that one?"

"Oh, he is the battalion astronomer; he guides us on night manœuvres!"

Then, seeing her companion's badge, which represented an ancient stringed instrument, she asked:

"And does that mean you are the regimental 'liar'?"

QUITE A FEAT.

It was during severe weather in the trenches. Two bombers stood almost knee-deep in the icy-cold mud on sentry.

"I say, Jack," said one, "this is a feat of endurance, isn't it?"

"No," retorted the other, "it's an endurance of feet!"

LITTLE SISTER

By Booth Tarkington.

"There was a little girl, and she had a little curl
Right down the middle of her forehead,
And when she was good she was very, very good,
And when she was bad she was horrid."

William Sylvester Baxter, but lately arrived at the romantic yet sometimes painful age of seventeen, often felt that his ten-year-old sister Jane was a mortification which his parents might have spared him, with no loss to themselves or to the world. Not having shown that consideration for anybody, they might at least have been less spinelessly indulgent to her. William's bitter conviction was that he had never seen a child so starved of discipline or so lost to etiquette as Jane.

For one thing, her passion for bread-and-butter, covered with apple sauce and powdered sugar, was getting to be a serious matter. Moreover, there were times when Jane had worse things than apple sauce to answer for, as William made clear to his mother in an oration as hot as the July noon sun which looked down upon it.

Mrs. Baxter was pleasantly engaged with a watering-can and some small flower-beds in the shady back garden, and Jane, having returned from various excursions, stood close by as spectator, her hands replenished with the favourite food and her chin rising and falling in gentle motions, little prophecies of the slight distensions which passed down her slender throat with slow, rhythmic regularity. Upon this calm scene came William, plunging round a corner of the house, furious yet plaintive.

"You've got to do something about that child!" he began. "I *can* not stand it!"

Jane looked at him dumbly, not ceasing, however, to eat, while Mrs. Baxter thoughtfully continued her watering.

"You've been gone all the morning, Willie," she said. "I thought your father mentioned at breakfast that he expected you to put in at least four hours a day on your mathematics and——"

"That's neither here nor there," William returned vehemently. "I just want to say this: if you don't do something about Jane, I will! Just look at her! *Look* at her, I

ask you! That's just the way she looked half-an-hour ago out in the public street in front of the house when I came by here with Miss Pratt! *That* was pleasant, wasn't it? To be walking with a lady in the public street and meet a member of my family looking like that! Oh, *lovely!*"

In the anguish of this recollection his voice cracked, and, though his eyes were dry, his gestures wept for him. Plainly he was about to reach the most lamentable portion of his narrative.

"And then she yelled at me! She yelled '*Will—ee!*' till it's a wonder we didn't go deaf! And just *look* at her! I don't see how you can stand having her go about like that and people knowing she's your child! Why, she hasn't got enough *on!*"

Mrs. Baxter laughed.

"Oh, for this very hot weather, I really don't think people notice or care much about——"

"'Notice'!" he wailed. "I guess Miss *Pratt* noticed! Hot weather's no excuse. Why, half of what she *has* got on has come unfastened—especially those frightful things hanging down her legs. And look at her back, I just ask you! I ask you to look at her back. You can see her spinal cord."

"Column," Mrs. Baxter corrected. "Spinal column, Willie."

"What do *I* care which it is?" he fumed. "People aren't supposed to go around with it *exposed*, whichever it is! And with apple sauce on their ears!"

"There is not!" Jane protested, and at the moment when she spoke she was right. Naturally, however, she lifted her hands to the accused ears, and the unfortunate result was to justify William's statement.

"Look!" he cried. "I just ask you to look! Think of it—*that's* the sight I have to meet with when I'm out walking with Miss *Pratt!* She asked me who it was, and I wish you'd seen her face. She wanted to know who 'that curious child' was, and I'm glad you didn't hear the way she said it. 'Who *is* that curious child?' she said, and I had to tell her it was my sister. I had to tell Miss *Pratt* it was my only *sister!*"

"Willie, who is Miss Pratt?" asked Mrs. Baxter mildly. "I don't think I've ever heard——"

Jane had returned to an admirable imperturbability, but she chose this moment to interrupt her mother, and her own eating, with remarks delivered in a tone void of emphasis or expression.

"Willie's mashed on her," she said casually. "And she wears false side-curls. One almost came off."

At this unspeakable desecration William's face was that of a high-priest stricken at the altar.

"She's visitin' Miss May Parcher," added the deadly Jane. "But the Parchers are awful tired of her. They wish she'd go home, but they don't like to tell her so."

One after another these insults from the *canaille* fell upon the ears of William. That slanders so atrocious could soil the universal air seemed unthinkable. He became icily calm.

"*Now* if you don't punish her," he said deliberately, "it's because you've lost your sense of duty!"

Having uttered these terrible words, he turned upon his heel and marched towards the house. His mother called after him:

"Wait, Willie. Jane doesn't mean to hurt your feelings——"

He halted.

"Jane didn't mean anything," said Mrs. Baxter. "And if you think Miss Pratt is so nice, I'll ask May Parcher to bring her to tea with us some day. If it's too hot, we'll have iced tea, and you can ask Johnnie Watson if you like. Don't get so upset about things, Willie!"

"'Upset'!" he echoed, appealing to heaven against this word. "'Upset'!" And he entered the house in a manner most dramatic.

"What made you say that?" Mrs. Baxter asked, turning curiously to Jane when William had disappeared. "Where did you hear any such thing?"

"I was there," Jane replied, gently eating on and on. William could come and William could go, but Jane's alimentary canal went on for ever.

"You were where, Jane?"

"At the Parchers'."

"Oh, I see."

"Yesterday afternoon," said Jane, "when Miss Parcher had her Sunday School class for lemonade and cakes."

"Did you hear Miss Parcher say——"

"No," said Jane. "I ate too many cakes, I think. Anyway, Miss Parcher said I'd better lay down——"

"*Lie* down, Jane."

"Yes, mother. On the sofa in the liberry, an' Mrs. Parcher an' Mr. Parcher came in there an' sat down, after a while, an' it was kind of dark, an' they didn't hardly notice me, or they thought I was asleep perhaps. Anyway, they didn't talk loud, but Mr. Parcher would sort of grunt an' he seemed cross. He said he just wished he knew when he was goin' to have a home again. Then Mrs. Parcher said May *had* to ask her Sunday School class, but he said he never meant the Sunday School class. He said since Miss Pratt came to stay

there wasn't anywhere he could go, because Willie Baxter an' Jolonnie Watson an' Joe Bullitt an' all the other ones like that were there all the time, an' it made him just sick to death, an' he did wish there was some way to find out when she was goin' home, because he couldn't stand much more talk about love.

"He said he couldn't sit on his own verandah any more; he said he couldn't sit even in the liberry but he had to hear baby-talk goin' on *somewhere*, an' then either Willie Baxter or Joe Bullitt or somebody or another arguin' about love. Mamma, he said"—Jane became impressive—"he said, mamma, he said he didn't mind the Sunday School class, but he couldn't stand those dam' boys!"

"Jane!" Mrs. Baxter cried, "you *mustn't* say such things!"

"I didn't, mamma. Mr. Parcher said it. He said he couldn't stand those da——"

"*Jane!* No matter what he said you mustn't repeat——"

"But I'm not. I only said Mr. *Parcher* said he couldn't stand those d——"

Mrs. Baxter cut the argument short by imprisoning Jane's mouth with a firm hand. Jane continued to swallow quietly until released. Then she said:

"But, mamma, how can I tell you what he said unless I say——"

"Hush!" Mrs. Baxter commanded. "You must never, never again use such a terrible and wicked word."

"I won't, mamma," Jane said meekly. Then she brightened. "Oh, *I* know! I'll say 'word' instead. Won't that be all right?"

"I—I suppose so."

"Well, Mr. Parcher said he couldn't stand those word boys. That sounds all right, doesn't it, mamma?"

Mrs. Baxter hesitated, but she was inclined to hear as complete a report as possible of Mr. and Mrs. Parcher's conversation, since it seemed to concern William so nearly; and she well knew that Jane had her own way of telling things—or else they remained untold.

"I—I suppose so," Mrs. Baxter said again.

"Well, they kind of talked along," Jane continued, much pleased, "an' Mr. Parcher said when he was young he wasn't any such a—such a word fool as these young word fools were. He said in all his born days Willie Baxter was the wordest fool he ever saw!"

Willie Baxter's mother flushed a little. "That was very unjust and very wrong of Mr. Parcher," she said primly.

"Oh, no, mamma!" Jane protested. "Mrs. Parcher thought so, too."

"Did she, indeed!"

"Only she didn't say word or wordest or anything like that," Jane explained. "She said it was because Miss Pratt had coaxed him to be so in love with her, an' Mr. Parcher said he didn't care whose fault it was, Willie was a—a word calf an' so were all the rest of 'em, Mr. Parcher said."

"There!" Mrs. Baxter interrupted sharply. "That will do, Jane. We'll talk about something else now, I think."

The confidential talk between mother and daughter at noon was not the last to take place that day. At nightfall—eight o'clock in this pleasant season—Jane was saying her prayers beside her bed, while her mother stood close by, ready to put out the light.

"—An' bless mamma and papa an'——" Jane murmured, coming to a pause. "An' —an' bless Willie," she added with a little reluctance.

"Go on, dear," said her mother. "You haven't finished."

"I know it, mamma," Jane looked up to say. "I was just thinkin' a minute. I want to tell you about somep'm."

"Finish your prayers first, Jane."

Jane obeyed with a swiftness in which there was no intentional irreverence. Then she jumped into bed and began a fresh revelation.

"It's about papa's clo'es, mamma."

"What clothes of papa's? What do you mean, Jane?" asked Mrs. Baxter, puzzled.

"The ones you couldn't find. The ones you've been lookin' for every day."

"You mean papa's evening clothes?"

"Yes," said Jane. "Willie's got 'em on."

"What!"

"Yes, he has!" Jane assured her with emphasis. "He's had 'em on every single evening since Miss Pratt came to visit the Parchers! Anyway, he's got 'em on now, 'cause I saw 'em."

Mrs. Baxter bit her lip and frowned.

"Are you sure, Jane?"

"Yes, mamma. I saw him in 'em."

"How?"

"Well, I was in my bare feet after I got undressed—before you came upstairs—mamma, an' I was kind of walkin' around on the landing——"

"You shouldn't do that, Jane."

"No, mamma. An' I heard Willie say somep'm kind of to himself, or like declamation. He was inside his room, but the door wasn't quite shut. He started out once, but he went back for somep'm and forgot it, I guess. Anyway, I thought I'd better look an' see what was goin' on, mamma. So I just kind of peeped in——"

"But you shouldn't do that, dear," Mrs.

Baxter said musingly. "It isn't really quite honourable."

"No, mamma. Well, what d'you think he was doing? He was standin' up there in papa's clo'es before the lookin'-glass, an' first he'd lean his head over on one side, an' then he'd lean it over on the other side, an' then he'd bark, mamma."

"He'd what?"

"He'd give a little, teeny *bark*, mamma—kind of like a puppy."

"What?" cried Mrs. Baxter.

"Yes, he did," Jane asserted. "He did it four or five times. First he'd lean his head over on his shoulder like this—look, mamma!—an' then he'd lean it over the other shoulder, an' every time he'd do it he'd bark. 'Berp-werp!' he'd say, mamma—just like that, only not loud at all. He said 'Berp-werp! *Berp-werp-werp!*' You could tell he meant it for barkin', but it wasn't very good. What do you think he meant, mamma?"

"Heaven knows!" murmured the astonished mother.

"An' then," Jane continued, "he stopped barkin' all of a sudden, an' didn't lean his head over any more, an' commenced bein' kind of solemn, an' kind of whispered to himself. I think he was kind of pretendin' he was talkin' to Miss Pratt, or at a party, maybe. Anyways, he spoke out loud after a while—not just exactly *loud*, I mean, but so's I could hear what he said. Mamma, he said: 'Oh, my baby-talk lady!' just like that, mamma. Listen mamma, here's the way he said it: 'Oh, my baby-talk lady!'"

Jane's voice, in this impersonation, became sufficiently soft and tremulous to give Mrs. Baxter a fair idea of the tender yearning of the original.

"'*Oh, my baby-talk lady!*'" cooed the terrible Jane.

"Mercy!" Mrs. Baxter exclaimed, with her hand upon the switch of the shaded electric lamp.

For a moment or two she wrapped herself in thought.

"Perhaps"—she repeated musingly—"perhaps we'll keep this just a secret between you and me for a little while, Jane, and not say anything to papa about the clothes. I don't think it will hurt them, and I suppose Willie feels they give him a great advantage over the other boys—and papa uses them so very little, especially since he's grown a wee bit stouter. Yes, it will be our secret, Jane. We'll think it over till to-morrow."

"Yes, mamma."

Mrs. Baxter turned out the light, then came and kissed Jane in the dark. "Good-night, dear."

"G'night, mamma." But as Mrs. Baxter reached the door, Jane's voice was heard again.

"Mamma!"

"Yes?" Mrs. Baxter paused.

"Mamma," Jane said slowly, "I think—I think Mr. Parcher is a very nice man. Mamma!"

"Yes, dear?"

"Mamma, what do you s'pose Willie barked at the lookin'-glass for?"

"That," said Mrs. Baxter, "is beyond me."

"You know what I think? I think he was kind of practisin'. I think he was practisin' how to bark at Mr. Parcher."

"No, no!" Mrs. Baxter laughed. "Whoever could think of such a thing but you, Jane. You go to sleep, and forget your nonsense!"

Nevertheless, Jane might almost have been gifted with clairvoyance, her preposterous idea came so close to the actual fact, for at that very moment Willie was barking, not directly at Mr. Parcher, it is true, but within a short distance of him, and all too well within his hearing. And Mr. Parcher, that unhappy gentleman having been driven indoors from his own verandah, had attempted to read "Plutarch's Lives" in the library, but, owing to the adjacency of the verandah and the summer necessity of open windows, his escape spared only his eyes and not his suffering ears.

It was a small house, being but half of a double one, with small rooms, and the drawing-room, library, and dining-room all about equally exposed to the verandah. Mr. Parcher had no refuge except bed or the kitchen, and as he was troubled with chronic insomnia, and the cook had callers in the kitchen, his case was desperate. Most unfortunately, too, his reading-lamp, the only one in the house, was a fixture near a window, and just beyond that window sat Miss Pratt and William in sweet unconsciousness, while Miss Parcher entertained the overflow (consisting of Mr. Johnnie Watson) at the other end of the verandah.

"Oh, cute-ums!" came the silvery voice of Miss Pratt from the silvery porch outside, underneath the summer moon, addressing her small dog. "Darling Flopit, look! Ickle boy Baxter goin' make imitations of darling Flopit again. See! Ickle boy Baxter puts head one side, then other side, just like darling Flopit. Then barks just like darling Flopit. Ladies and 'entlemen, imitations of darling Flopit by ickle boy Baxter."

"Berp-werp! Berp-werp!" came the voice of William Sylvester Baxter.

And in the library "Plutarch's Lives" moved convulsively, while with writhing lips Mr. Parcher muttered to himself.

"More, more!" cried Miss Pratt, clapping her hands. "Do it again, ickle boy Baxter!"

"Berp-werp! Berp-werp!"

"*Word! Word! Word!*" muttered Mr. Parcher.

Miss Pratt's voice became surcharged with honeyed wonder. "How did he learn such marv'lous, *marv'lous* imitations of darling Flopit? He ought to go on the big, big stage, and be a really actor, oughtn't he, darling Flopit? He could make milyums and milyums of pounds, couldn't he, darling Flopit?"

William's modest laugh disclaimed any great ambition for himself in this line.

"Oh, I always could think up imitations of animals, things like that—but I would hardly care to—to adopt the stage for a career, would you?" There was a thrill in his voice when he pronounced the ineffably significant word "you."

Miss Pratt became intensely serious.

"It's my *dream!*"

William, seated upon a stool at her feet, gazed up at the golden head, divinely splashed by the rain of moonlight. The fire with which she spoke stirred him as few things had ever stirred him.

Then, like an inspiration, there came into his head some words he had read that day and thought beautiful. He had found them beneath an illustration in a magazine, and he spoke them almost instinctively:

"It was wonderful of you to say that to me," he said. "I shall never forget it!"

"It's my *dream!*" Miss Pratt exclaimed again, with the same enthusiasm. "It's my *dream!*"

"You would make a glorious actress!" he said.

At that her mood changed; she laughed a laugh like a sweet little girl's laugh (not Jane's) and, setting her rocking-chair in motion, held up the fuzzy white doglet.

"Ickle boy Baxter t'yin' flatterbox us, tunnin' Flopit! No'ty, no'ty flatterbox!"

"No, no!" William insisted earnestly. "I mean it. But—but——"

"But whatcums?"

"What do you think about actors and actresses making love to each other on the stage? Do you think they have to feel it really, or do they just pretend?"

"Well," said Miss Pratt weightily, "sometimes one way, sometimes the other."

She laughed a laugh like a sweet little girl's laugh (not Jane's) and, setting her rocking-chair in motion, held up the fuzzy white doglet.

William's gravity became more and more profound.

"Yes, but how can they pretend like that? Don't you think love is a sacred thing, Cousin Lola?"

There was no relationship or consanguinity between Miss Pratt and William. Fictitious sisterships, brotherships, and cousinships are devices to push things along, well known to seventeen and even more advanced ages.

On the wonderful evening of their first meeting William and Miss Pratt had cosily arranged to be called respectively "Ickle boy Baxter" and "Cousin Lola." Thus they had broken down the tedious formalities of their first twenty minutes together.

"Don't you think love is sacred?" he repeated in the deepest tone of which his vocal cords were capable.

"Ess," said Miss Pratt.

"*I* do," said William warmly. "I—I'm glad you feel like that, because I think real love is the kind nobody could have but just once in their lives, but if it isn't *real* love, why—why most people never have it at all, because—"

He paused, seeming to seek for the exact phrase which would express his meaning.

"—Because the *real* love a man feels for a girl and a girl for a man, if they *really* love each other, and, in a case like that, of course they would *both* love each other or it wouldn't be real love—well, what *I* say is, if it's *real* love, well—it's, it's sacred, because I think that kind of love is always sacred. Don't you think love is sacred if it's the real thing?"

"Ess," said Miss Pratt. "Do Flopit again. Be Flopit!"

"Berp-werp! Berp-werp-werp!"

And within the library an agonised man writhed and muttered:

"*Word! Word!* WORD——"

This hoarse repetition had now become almost continuous.

But out on the verandah, that little, jasmine-scented bower in Arcady where youth cried to youth and golden heads were haloed in the moonshine, there fell a silence.

It was William who broke the silence.

"How—" he began, and his voice trembled a little—"how—how do you—how do you think of me, when I'm not with you?"

"Think nice-cums," Miss Pratt responded. "Flopit and me think nice-cums."

"No," said William; "I mean what name do you have for me when you're—when you're thinking about me?"

Miss Pratt seemed to be puzzled, perhaps justifiably, and she made a cooing sound of interrogation.

"I mean like this," William explained. "F'rinstance, when you first came, I always thought of you as 'Milady'—when I wrote that poem, you know."

"Ess. Boo'fums."

"But now I don't," he said. "Now I think of you by another name when I'm alone. It—it just sort of came to me. I was kind of just sitting down this afternoon and I didn't know I was thinking about anything at all very much, and then all of a sudden I said it to myself out loud. It was about as strange a thing as I ever heard of. Don't *you* think so?"

"Ess. It uz dest *weird!*" she answered. "What *are* dat pitty names?"

"I called you," said William huskily and reverently, "I called you 'My Baby-Talk Lady.'"

Bang! They were startled by a crash from within the library; a heavy weight seemed to have fallen (or to have been hurled) a considerable distance. Stepping to the window, William beheld a large volume lying in a distorted attitude at the foot of the wall opposite to that in which the reading-lamp was a fixture. But of all human life the room was empty; Mr. Parcher had given up and was now hastening to his bed in the last faint hope of saving his reason.

William gazing upon the fallen Plutarch, had just offered the explanation:

"Somebody must have thrown it at an insect or something," when the second explosion sent its reverberations through the house.

"My doodness!" Miss Pratt exclaimed, jumping up.

William laughed reassuringly, remaining calm.

"It's only a door blown shut upstairs," he said. "Let's sit down again—just the way we were."

Unfortunately for him, Mr. Joe Bullitt now made his appearance at their end of the verandah. Mr. Bullitt, though almost a year younger than either William or Johnnie Watson, was of a turbulent and masterful disposition. Moreover, in regard to Miss Pratt his affections were in as ardent a state as those of his rivals, and he lacked Johnnie's meekness; he firmly declined to be shunted by Miss Parcher, who was trying to favour William's cause according to a promise he had won from her by strong pleading.

Regardless of her efforts, Mr. Bullitt descended upon William and his Baby-Talk-Lady, and received from the latter a honeyed greeting somewhat to the former's astonishment, and not at all to his pleasure.

"Oh!" cried Miss Pratt. "Here's big Bruvva Josie-Joe!" And she lifted her little dog close to Mr. Bullitt's face, guiding one of Flopit's paws with her fingers. "Stroke big bruvva Josie-Joe's pint teeks, darling Flopit. 'At's nice," she remarked. "Stroke him gently, p'ecious Flopit, an' nen we'll coax him to make pitty singin' for us, like us did yestiday." She turned to William. "*Coax* him to make pitty singin'! I *love* his voice—I'm dest *crazy* over it, isn't 'oo?"

William's passion for Mr. Bullitt's voice appeared to be under control. He laughed coldly, almost harshly.

"He sing?" he said. "Has he been tryin' to sing *here?* I wonder the family didn't call for the police."

It was to be seen that Mr. Bullitt did not relish the sally.

"Well, they will," he retorted, "if you ever try one of your solos on 'em." And, turning to Miss Pratt, he laughed loudly and bitterly. "You ought to hear him sing—some time when you don't mind goin' to bed ill for a couple of days!"

Symptoms of truculence at once became alarmingly pronounced on both sides. William's evening clothes were hard enough for both Mr. Watson and Mr. Bullitt to bear without any additional insolence on the part of the wearer. Big bruvva Josie-Joe took a step towards his enemy and breathed audibly.

"Let's *all* sing," the tactful Miss Pratt proposed hastily. "Come on, May and cousin Johnnie-Jump-Up," she called to Miss Parcher and Mr. Watson. "Singin'-school,

dirls an' boys! Singin'-school! Ding, ding! Singin'-school bell's a-wingin'!"

Miss Pratt kept the tune. William also kept it part of the time and hunted for it the rest of the time, though never in silence. Miss Parcher sang alto, Mr. Bullitt sang bass, and Mr. Watson sang tenor—that is, he sang as high as possible, often making the top sound of a chord and always repeating the last phrase of each line before the others finished it:

Oh, I love my love in the morning,
And I love my love at night,
I love my love in the dawning,
And when the stars are bright.
Some may love the sunshine,
Others may love the dew;
Some may love the raindrops,
But I love only-*you-oo-oo!*
By the stars up above
It is you I luh-*huv!*
Yes, *I* love own-*lay* you!

They sang it four times; then Mr. Bullitt sang his solo, "Tell Her, O Golden Moon, How I Adore Her," William following with "The viol *ates* love the cowslip, but *I* love *yew*," and after that they all sang, "Oh, I love my love in the morning" again.

All this while that they sang of love, Mr. Parcher was moving to and fro upon his bed, not more than eighteen feet in an oblique upward-slanting line from the heads of the serenaders.

By a coincidence not more singular than most coincidences, it happened that at just about the time he finally fell asleep a young lady at no great distance from him awoke to find herself thinking of him.

This was Miss Jane Baxter. She opened her eyes upon the new-born day, and her first thoughts were of Mr. Parcher. That is, he was already in her mind when she awoke, a circumstance to be accounted for on the ground that his conversation, during her quiet convalescence in his library, had so fascinated her that in all likelihood she had been dreaming of him. Then, too, Jane and Mr. Parcher had a bond in common, though Mr. Parcher did not know it. Not without result had William repeated Miss Pratt's inquiry in Jane's hearing: "Who *is* that curious child?" Jane had preserved her *sang-froid*, but the words remained with her, for she was one of those who ponder and retain in silence.

Who can say, then, that it was not by design that she came face to face with Mr. Parcher in the public highway at about five o'clock that afternoon?

Mr. Parcher was walking home from his office, and he walked slowly, gulping from time to time, as he thought of the inevitable evening before him. What allured him was the idea that perhaps he could find lodging for a time at an Old People's Home, where the minimum age for inmates was about eighty.

Walking more and more slowly as he approached the dwelling he had once thought of as home, he became aware of a little girl in a striped dress approaching him at a gait varied by the indifferent behaviour of a hoop which she was disciplining with a stick held in her right hand. When the hoop behaved well she came ahead rapidly; when it affected to be intoxicated, which was most often its whim, she zigzagged with it and gained little ground. But all the while, and without reference to what went on concerning the hoop, she slowly and continuously fed herself with her left hand, small, solemnly relished bites of a slice of bread and butter covered with apple-sauce and powdered sugar.

Mr. Parcher looked upon her and he shivered slightly; he knew her to be Willie Baxter's sister.

Unaware of the emotion she produced in him, Jane checked her hoop and halted.

"G'd afternoon, Mr. Parcher," she said gravely.

"Good afternoon," he returned, without much spirit.

Jane looked up at him trustfully and with a strange, unconscious fondness.

"You goin' home now, Mr. Parcher?" she asked, turning to walk at his side. She had suspended the hoop over her left arm and transferred the bread and butter and apple-sauce and sugar to her right, so that she could eat even more conveniently than before.

"I suppose so," he murmured.

"My brother Willie's been at your house all the afternoon," she remarked.

He repeated "I suppose so," but in a tone which combined the vocal tokens of misery and of hopeless animosity.

"He just went home," said Jane. "I was 'cross the street from your house, but he didn't see me. He kept lookin' back at your house. Miss Pratt was on the verandah."

"I suppose so!" This time it was a moan.

Jane proceeded to give him some information. "My brother Willie isn't comin' back to your house to-night, but he doesn't know it yet."

"What!" exclaimed Mr. Parcher.

"Willie isn't goin' to spend any more evenings at your house at all," said Jane thoughtfully. "He isn't, but he doesn't know it yet."

Mr. Parcher gazed fixedly at the wonderful

child, and something like a ray of sunshine flickered over his seamed and harried face.

"Are you *sure* he isn't?" he asked.

"It's on account of somep'm I told mamma," said demure Jane.

"He'll come in the afternoons," went on Jane. "But you aren't home then, Mr. Parcher, except late, like you were that day of the Sunday School class. It was on account of what you said that day. I told mamma."

"Told your mamma what?"

"What you said."

Mr. Parcher's perplexity continued. "What about?"

"About Willie. *You* know!" Jane smiled fraternally.

"No, I don't."

"It was when I was layin' in the liberry, that day of the Sunday School class," Jane told him. "You an' Mrs. Parcher was talkin' in there about Miss Pratt an' Willie an' everything."

"Good heavens!" Mr. Parcher, summoning his memory, had placed the occasion and Jane together. "Did you *hear* all that?"

"Yes." Jane nodded. "I told mamma all what you said."

"Murder!"

"Well," said Jane, "I guess it's well I did, because, look, that's the very reasen mamma did somep'm so's he can't come any more except in daytime."

"Is it because your mamma is going to tell him he can't?"

"No, Mr. Parcher. Mamma says he's too old—an' she said she didn't like to, anyway. She just *did* somep'm."

"What? What did she do?"

"It's a secret," said Jane. "I could tell you the first part of it—up to where the secret begins, I expect."

"Do!" Mr. Parcher urged.

"Well, it's about somep'm Willie's been *wearin'*," Jane began, moving closer to him as they slowly walked onward. "I can't tell you what they were, because that's the secret—but he had 'em on every evening when he came to see Miss Pratt, but they belong to papa, an' papa doesn't know a word about it. Well, one evening papa wanted to put 'em on, because he had a right to, Mr. Parcher, an' Willie didn't have any right to at all, but mamma couldn't find 'em, an' she rummidged an' rummidged all next day an' every day since then an' never did find 'em, until I saw Willie inside of 'em only last night!

"He was startin' over to your house to see Miss Pratt in 'em! So I told mamma, an' she said it'd haf to be a secret, so that's why I can't tell you what they were. Well, an' then this afternoon early I was with her, an' she said, as I had told her the secret in the first place, I could come into Willie's room with her, an' we were both already in there anyway, 'cause I was kind of thinkin' maybe she'd go in there to look for 'em, Mr. Parcher——"

"I see," he said admiringly. "I see."

"Well, they were under Willie's window-seat, all folded up; an' mamma said she wondered what she'd better do, and she was worried because she didn't like to have Willie behave so's you an' Mrs. Parcher thought like that about him.

"So she said the—the secret—what Willie wears, you know, but they're really papa's an' aren't Willie's any more'n they're mine—well, she said the secret was gettin' a little teeny bit too tight for papa, but they—I mean the secret—she said it was already pretty loose for Willie, so she wrapped it up, an' I went with her, an' we took 'em to a tailor, an' she told him to make 'em bigger, for a surprise for papa, 'cause then they'll fit him again, Mr. Parcher. She said he must make 'em a whole lot bigger. She said he must let 'em out ever so! So I guess Willie would look too funny in 'em after they're done, an' anyway, Mr. Parcher, the secret won't be home from the tailor's for two weeks, an' maybe by that time Miss Pratt'll be gone."

They had reached Mr. Parcher's gate; he halted and looked down fondly upon this child who seemed to have read his soul.

"Do you honestly think so?" he asked.

"Well, anyway, Mr. Parcher," said Jane, "mamma said, well, she said she's sure Willie wouldn't come here in the evening any more—when *you're* at home, Mr. Parcher—'cause after he's been wearin' the secret every night this way he wouldn't like to come and not have the secret on. Mamma said the reason he would feel like that was 'cause he was seventeen years old. An' she isn't goin' to tell him anything about it, Mr. Parcher—she said that's the best way."

Her new friend nodded and seemed to agree.

"I suppose that's what you meant when you said he wasn't coming back but didn't know it yet?"

"Yes, Mr. Parcher."

He rested an elbow upon the gatepost, gazing down with ever increasing esteem. "Of course I know your last name," he said, "but I'm afraid I've forgotten your other one."

"It's Jane."

"Jane," said Mr. Parcher, "I should like to do something for you."

Jane looked down, and with eyes modestly

lowered she swallowed the last fragment of the bread and butter and apple-sauce and sugar which had been the constantly evanescent companion of their little walk together. She was not mercenary; she had sought no reward.

"Well, I must run home," she said. And with one lift of her eyes to his and a shy laugh—laughter being a rare thing for Jane—she scampered quickly to the corner, and was gone.

But though she cared for no reward, the extraordinary restlessness of William, that evening after dinner, must at least have been of great interest to her. He ascended to his own room directly from the table, but about twenty minutes later came down to the library, where Jane was sitting (her privilege until half-past seven) with her father and mother.

William looked from one to the other of his parents, and seemed about to speak, but did not do so. Instead, he departed for the upper floor again, and presently could be heard moving about energetically in various parts of the house, a remote thump finally indicating that he was doing something with a trunk in the attic. After that he came down to the library again, and once more seemed about to speak, but thought better of it and did not.

Jane checked her hoop and halted. "G'd afternoon, Mr. Parcher," she said gravely. [Page 377, col. 2.]

Then he went upstairs again, and came down again, and he was still repeating this process when Jane's time-limit was up, and she repaired conscientiously to her little bed. Her mother went to hear her prayers and to turn out the light; and when Mrs. Baxter had passed out into the passage after that, Jane heard her speaking to William, who was now conducting what seemed from the noise to be excavations on a serious scale in his own room.

Jane listened intently.

"Oh, Willie, perhaps I didn't tell you—you remember I'd been missing papa's evening clothes and looking everywhere—for days and days?"

"Ye-es," huskily from William.

"Well, I found them! And where do you suppose I'd put them? I found them under your window-seat. Can you think of anything more absurd than putting them there and then forgetting it? I took them to the tailor's to have them let out. They were getting too tight for papa, but they'll be all right for him when the tailor sends them back."

What the stricken William gathered from this it is impossible to state with accuracy; probably he mixed some perplexity with his emotions. And certainly he was perplexed the following evening at dinner at the turn events had taken.

Jane did not appear at the table. "Poor child, she's ill in bed," Mrs. Baxter explained to her husband. "I was out this afternoon, and she ate nearly *all* of a five pound box of chocolates."

Both the sad-eyed William and his father were dumbfounded.

"Where on earth did she get a five-pound box of chocolates?" Mr. Baxter demanded.

"I'm afraid Jane has begun her first affair," said Mrs. Baxter. "A gentleman sent it to her."

"What gentleman?" gasped William incredulously.

And in his mother's eyes, as they slowly came to rest on his in reply, he was aware of an inscrutability strongly reminiscent of that inscrutable look of Jane's.

"Mr. Parcher," she said gently.

By Gerard Fiennes.

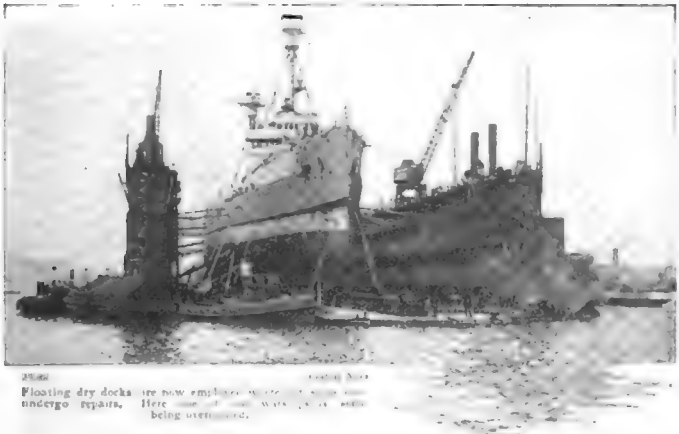
"When war was declared, the Navy had but to stick to its old motto: 'Carry On!' It knew exactly what to do, and it is doing it." That is how Mr. Gerard Fiennes, one of our well-known naval writers, sums up the matter in this striking article.

The scene is a broad stretch of grey water—an inland sea, surrounded by brown hills. On its surface lie grey ships in long streets, with the smooth water-lanes between—a well-planned, well-laid-out city. Nearer, are other ships, smaller ships, some grey, some black, some showing patches of red. They cluster round one great, slate-coloured warship as the cottages of a village are huddled round the parish church. Among them, and down the ordered streets of the battle-fleet, destroyers, torpedo-boats, picket-boats with bell-topped brass funnels, twist and turn and glide.

The white sails of a cutter remind the onlooker that the Navy still retains something of its old love of canvas. There are even whalers and dinghies and gigs, with men pulling for dear life, in training for the Fleet regatta.

In other words, here lies the Grand Fleet of Britain, with its supply ships, colliers, and oil-tankers, peaceful, to the outward eye, in the midst of war, but ready, as the Germans found out on May 31st, to weigh anchor and be at them. And then the best they could do was to scuttle home. They were wise men, too, and no cowards. It was not their business to commit suicide.

On the quarter-deck of a great battleship which flies from her mast-head a white flag with the red Cross of St. George upon it, there stands a short man with dark, penetrating eyes and rather prominent features; near him, another with ruddy face and black beard slightly marked with grey. These two wear the broad gold band which marks Admiral's rank on their cuffs, the one with three narrower stripes above it, the other with two. Behind them towers a red-faced giant, with the four stripes of a post-captain



Floating dry docks are now employed [illegible] undergo repairs. Here [illegible] being overhauled.

on his arm. The ship is the *Iron Duke;* the officers are the Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Fleet, his Chief of Staff, and Flag Captain. Now you are at the centre of affairs, in the presence of the brain which controls the mighty engine which stands between you and me and the Prussian jack-boot.

These are the men who won the great victory — not amid the thunder of the guns off Jutland, but months and months before, when, shortly before August 4th, 1914, they slid away into the northern mists and cut Fritz off from those waters upon which, according to the All Highest, his future lies. The Grand Fleet lies here; its antennæ stretch far into the Arctic Circle and right over to the mouth of the Baltic and the further coast of the North Sea.

Officers enjoying their first meal after the battle of May 31st, in which their ship distinguished herself by sinking a cruiser.

Elsewhere lies the famous "Cat Squadron," which proved itself in furious fight against the whole Bosche fleet, having at one period but four ships in action against twenty or more of the enemy. I have asserted that the victory was won months before this battle off the Jutland coast was fought. To illustrate my meaning, let me quote the classic passage from Mahan:

"Far away, Cornwallis off Brest, Collingwood off Rochefort, Pellew off Ferrol, were battling the wild gales of the Bay of Biscay, in that tremendous and sustained vigilance which reached its utmost tension in the years which preceded Trafalgar. . . . Farther distant still, Nelson before Toulon was wearing away the last two years of his glorious but suffering life, fighting the fierce North-Westers of the Gulf of Lyon, and questioning, questioning continually, with feverish anxiety, whether Napoleon's object was Egypt again or Great Britain really.

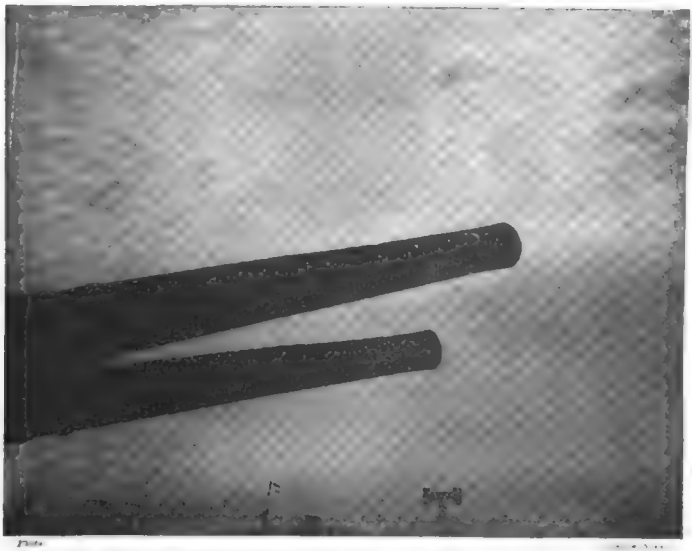
"They were dull, weary, eventless months, those months of watching and waiting of the big ships before the French arsenals. Purposeless they must have seemed to many, but they saved England. The world has never seen a more impressive demonstration of the influence of sea-power upon its history. Those far-distant, storm-beaten ships upon which the Grand Army never looked, stood between it and the dominion of the world."

Trafalgar was the climax, but Napoleon was defeated by the long watch. History has repeated itself, as the Germans have cause to know. But the watch has been a wearisome business. It has called for the highest moral strength on the part of the officers to keep the men up to "concert-pitch." How splendidly they have succeeded was shown when the Fleet met its enemy on the eve of Ascension Day.

A destroyer engaged on a peaceful enterprise, that of taking a party of journalists to the Grand Fleet.

Remember, the Navy commissioned crowds of new ships after the outbreak of war, and still more have been coming to hand week by week since. Many of these have had the most important duties to perform, and have required crews of the very best of our active-service men. Numbers of petty officers, moreover, have had to be taken away from the Grand Fleet to provide the skilled ratings for auxiliaries, monitors, and such-like.

On the other hand, of course,



The fighting efficiency of a fleet depends, first and foremost, on gunnery. Here are some of the guns which did such deadly work in the battle off Jutland.

some old ships have been paid off, and others have been sunk without the loss of their crews. But, when every allowance has been made, the provision of the highly trained men necessary for the new units has made a heavy drain on our resources, and could hardly have been supplied had it not been for the incessant work which has been done in training the younger hands up to the required standard.

Now, why have I introduced to your notice the little group of officers upon the quarter-deck of the Flagship? It is because the fighting efficiency of a fleet depends, first and foremost, on gunnery, and because good gunnery depends on training and on moral and physical fitness.

Admiral Sir John Jellicoe, like most good sailors, hates publicity. But it may be said of him that, again like most good sailors, he is, before all things, thoughtful for his men, and wins not only their confidence but their love. He was Second Sea Lord before he took command afloat, and, as such, was responsible for *personnel*. Those who were assiduous to bring about certain needed reforms in discipline and in the provision for the well-being and comfort of the men, found in him a most sympathetic listener, and much good work was accomplished, which has not been without its effect in sustaining that wonderful fighting spirit in the Fleet which has proved itself to be up to the very highest traditions of the Navy.

The Vice-Admiral is the executive brain, working out problems of strategy and tactics for his chief. The Captain is one of the chief gunnery experts of the Navy, and is where he is for that reason. The standard of shooting in the Navy was very high before the war. But now battle-practice is carried out at longer ranges than ever before, and there are more hits. And the health of the Fleet is so good that, at the time of which I am speaking, the sick bays were practically empty, save for a few cases of mumps and other infantile complaints, the infection of which was brought by young hands fresh from the training schools.

Inside the great turret, where the hands move round the clock face, giving range from the fire-control station aloft; where the huge guns rise and sink by invisible power, the breeches open and shut as by magic, and the chain rammer shoots out and back like the tongue of a snake, while the ammunition

cages, with their load of ponderous shell, come rumbling and clashing up from some cavern of the genii below, the watcher may be forgiven if he repeats the modern commonplace that war is nowadays a matter of machinery. But there never was an opinion more utterly mistaken.

War to-day, at any rate naval war, is more than ever a matter of the spirit of man. To load a ton of steel into a ninety-ton gun, and to fire it with precision four times in the minute at a target ten miles distant, demands the most swift and accurate judgment of a dozen minds, and their instant co-ordination with a dozen pairs of hands. And this amid the nerve-racking thunder of a hard-fought action, the concussion of your own guns and the rending blast of the enemy's projectiles. The men who are doing this for us have lived under constant strain for two years. They have slung their hammocks in the turrets and slept by their guns. They sometimes get two days leave when their ship goes into dock.

So, you see, it is the need of the ship for repair, not of the man for refreshment, which is the governing consideration. Yet the men have kept their poise and conquered the demon of monotony, so that they are fit for any sudden call upon them. The machine is master of their bodies; it is but the slave of their spirits.

I was on board a new ship, just commissioned, one of the most powerful of our Dreadnoughts. Within a week of my visit to her she was in action, and, as it happened, one of the ships of the main Fleet most heavily engaged. The ship was a hive of strenuous work from end to end. Here were the crews of the secondary guns, man-handling dummy projectiles, loading, firing, loading, firing as fast as the breech could open and shut. In another place an ingenious contrivance was in use, teaching the men to "straddle" the enemy. (To "straddle" a ship is to fire a salvo at her with the guns so ranged that, of an eight gun battery, let us say, three shots would fall short, three over, while the two intermediate possibly hit her.) The only man on board who seemed a trifle dejected was Number One, who bewailed the fact that he could not get hands enough to keep the ship clean. It would have required a microscopic eye to find much dirt upon her.

Now, in days before the war, it was considered that six months at least were required for a ship's company to shake down. Their officers did not consider them really efficient under a year. But, over and over again, ships which have only been a few weeks out of the dockyards have rendered a good account of themselves in action. The *Tiger* actually went into the Battle of the Dogger Bank with some of the dockyard hands on board, very much to their dismay. The *Arethusa* was only a fortnight in commission when she bore the brunt of the action in the Bight of Heligoland.

Wearisome people who always say the obvious thing, tell one continually that "sailors are always so charming . . ." Far be it from me to deny it. But, none the less, the sailor in war-time is, to my mind, more charming than the sailor in peace. He has doffed his attitude of boredom with his profession; he is keen, alert, the friend of all his shipmates. The bluejackets, somehow, approach nearer to their officers, the officers to their men. Perhaps the most wonderful admixture of all classes which has come in with the R.N.V.R. has something to do with it. I cannot define wherein the difference lies; I can only record it.

But let it not be supposed that work constitutes the whole routine of the Fleet. They are not striking an attitude, these men of the Grand Fleet. They have their "funny parties" and their entertainments; they have their football grounds for the men and golf course for the officers.

They are giving a great deal of earnest attention to the cultivation of vegetables in the barren soil around them. They run newspapers of their own, of which the journal of the *Broke* was a shining example.

Finally, in the Battle Cruiser Squadron, they are devoting time and energy to making munitions for the Army. It is gratuitous work, and it is meant to show the admiration which the men of the Fleet have for the lads in the trenches in France and Flanders.

It is a splendid stimulant to be among these men, a corrective for the "green sickness" which seems to afflict town-dwellers, who can see nothing aright. The Fleet is quite free from the wail of the pessimist, which makes life a burden to us inland. The sailors do not make the mistake of sneering at the enemy, and then singing out for some one to hang if easy anticipations of victory are not realised. British and Germans have been "chummy ships" in many a port, and our men know the enemy's worth.

They are out to beat him, and they will, because, after all, however gallant and efficient a foe may be, the lessons of sea-power are not learnt in a day. Our Navy has been learning them for years, with all the wealth of centuries of history, experience, and tradition at its back.

When war was declared, the Navy had but to stick to its old motto: "Carry On!" It knew exactly what it had to do, and it is doing it.

CAP & BELLS

"UP ABOVE THE WORLD SO HIGH."

Private Doherty was six-feet-four in his socks; the Sergeant was much shorter. The Sergeant looked along the line.

"Head up, there, Doherty?" he cried. Doherty raised his head.

"Up higher," said the little Sergeant. "There, that's better. Don't let me see your head down again."

"Am I always to be like this?" asked Doherty, staring away above the little Sergeant's head.

"You are."

"Then I'll say good-bye to ye, Sergeant, for I'll never see yez again."

* * * * *

A PREDICAMENT.

The weary cyclist plodded on,
In spite of pelting rain.
He tried to find a sign-post, but
His efforts were in vain.

He did not pass a single soul,
And much to his dismay,
One tyre was getting very flat
Which caused him some delay.

He could not see his way at all,
The night was dark and drear;
He ran into an obstacle—
A sign-post that was near.

He struck his last remaining match,
But soon his spirits sank;
There was no sign upon the post,
He found that it was blank!

Dorothy Harrison.

* * * * *

HOW WAS IT?

"Oh! Bobby," said mother, "you'll turn my hair grey if you are such a naughty boy."

The little fellow reflected for a moment. Then he observed delicately: "Mummie, grannie's hair is quite white."

EVEN THE PUDDING!

DAUGHTER (reading letter from brother in France): "Dear Sister and Mother, the pudding you sent was 'it.'"

MOTHER: "What a shame! Wi' one o' those shrapnels, I suppose."

* * * * *

A LIGHT PROPOSITION.

"Theatrical managers say that the easiest way to keep a star contented is to have her name over the door in electric lights."

"That keeps her from throwing up her job, eh?"

"Just so."

"Seems a good idea. I wonder if it would work with a cook?"

THE ENGAGED ONE: "George behaved quite absurdly when he proposed."

THE FLAPPER: "Yes, that's what everyone thought when the engagement was announced."

A HANGING MATTER.

DESPERATE SUITOR (to coquette): "If you don't answer me one way or the other—yes or no—I'll hang myself at your garden gate."

COQUETTE: "You mustn't do that. Father doesn't like young men hanging about the place!"

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A PLEASURE POSTPONED.

A well-known Scottish manufacturer was travelling in Palestine recently when news reached him of an addition to his family circle. The happy father immediately provided himself with some water from the Jordan to carry home for the christening of the infant, and returned to Scotland.

On the Sunday appointed for the ceremony he duly presented himself at the church and sought out the beadle in order to hand over the precious water to his care. As he pulled the flask from his pocket the beadle held up a warning hand, and came nearer to whisper:

"No the noo, sir; no the noo! Maybe after the kirk's oot!"

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CAUGHT!

SYBIL: "When Steve proposed to me he acted like a fish out of water."

MAUD: "Why shouldn't he? He knew he was caught!"

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TAKING NO RISKS.

The first time Bill, the groom, ever complained of feeling ill, his master sent him to town with the address of a doctor he knew. Bill came back next day and reported.

"Well, I took my medicine, but not from that doctor you sent me to," he said.

"Why not? Couldn't you find him?" asked the farmer.

"Oh, I found his place all right, with his name on a brass plate on the door. But underneath the name it said '10 to 1.' I wasn't goin' to take no such risks as that. There was another doctor next door, and his sign read '8 to 9.' The odds was so much better that I went to him."

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MISSING HER MARK.

GOVERNESS: "You're a naughty little girl, Christabel, to kick your cousin like that?"

CHRISTABEL: "I didn't kick her."

GOVERNESS: "Oh, hush, dear! I saw you kick her several times."

CHRISTABEL: "I didn't. I missed every time."

FORCE OF HABIT.

The Stock Exchange broker had been wounded in action. The doctor in the field hospital was taking his temperature.

"Ninety-eight, ninety-nine!" muttered the doctor to himself.

"When it reaches one hundred," said the stockbroker warrior, "sell out."

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A FAN FOR FATHER.

"Where's your wife this summer, Short?"

"She thinks she has lung trouble, so she's gone to spend the summer in South Cornwall."

"Are your daughters with her?"

"No, they find it too lonely there, so they're having a gay time at the seaside."

"I suppose your son is at home?"

"No, he's joined a party that are motoring through Scotland."

"And how are you getting on?"

"Oh, I've saved enough out of the family expenses to get an electric fan for the office."

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Voice from behind to trooper after vain attempts to catch horse with decoy and nosebag: "It's no use, you'll have to look like a lump of sugar or wear your smoke 'elmet."

AIRING HIS VIEWS.

The photographer was drying his plates in the warm sunlight.

"What are you doing there?" asked a friend.

"Oh," was the reply, "just airing my views."

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A BACK ANSWER.

Young was walking along the front at Margate, when a sudden gust relieved him of his straw hat. He turned, gave chase, and after a lengthy run at full speed, pounced upon it. At the same moment a stranger (also perspiring and almost breathless) took it from him and thanked him kindly.

"But it's my hat," said Young.

"No," said the other, "yours is hanging down your back on a string."

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ALWAYS SOMETHING.

Two Scots women, meeting one day, fell into conversation, and the one said to the other:

"Aye, Mrs. M'Tavish, an' so Jeanie's got married!"

"She has that, Mrs M'Alpine."

"An' how's she getting on?"

"Oh, no sae bad at a'. There's only one thing the matter. She canna bide her man! But, then, there's aye something."

The Lass That Loved a Soldier.

HOW SHE FAVOURED HIS SUIT WHEN HE CAME HOME WOUNDED FROM THE WAR.

① "O BUT I COULDN'T MARRY A SHIRKER! JOIN THE ARMY AND I'LL CONSIDER IT"

"BUT YOU'RE ONLY A PRIVATE NOW! I MUST HAVE AN OFFICER!"

② KATHLEEN ASHTON

"I DON'T LIKE YOU IN THAT UNIFORM. THE TUNIC IS JUST LIKE MINE."

③

④ BUT SHE LIKED HIM AND TOOK HIM LIKE THIS!

FREE QUARTERS.

HOTEL PROPRIETOR: "You shall not xis hotel leave until your bill you have paid 'im."

VISITOR: "You are too kind. Then this, I take it, is to be my permanent home?"

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THE OBVIOUS COURSE.

Scene: Doctor's house in main road, along which trams pass. Time: About 1.30 a.m.

Violent ringing at front-door bell.

DOCTOR (through night tube): "Who's there?"

"Mr. Tram."

"What?"

"Mr. Tram."

"Missed a tram—eh? Well, sit down and wait for the next one. Don't come bothering me."

HIS WISH WAS GRANTED.

Against his strong supporting arm,
S..e gently laid her head;
"I wish your cheek could always be
Just where it is," he said.

When turning up the lights at home,
He found to his dismay,
A te'-ta'e patch upon his coat—
He d brought her cheek away!

D. H.

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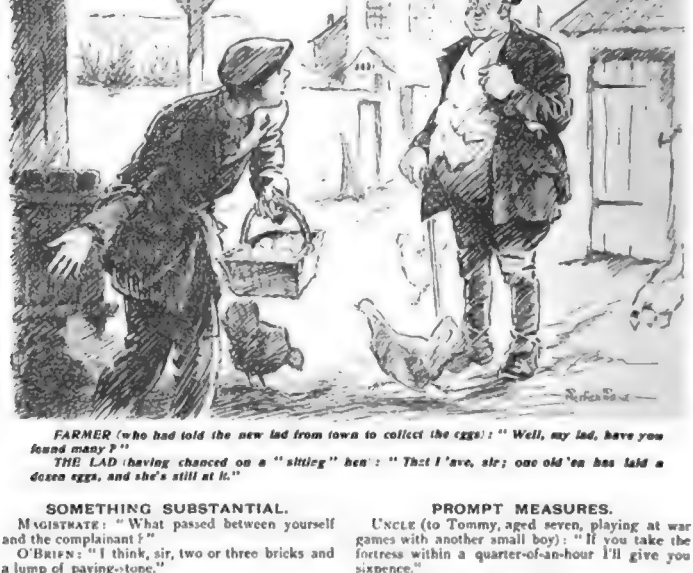
NOTHING UNUSUAL.

"Do you know," said the successful merchant, "that I began life as a 'barefoot boy'?"

"Well," said his clerk, "I wasn't born with shoes on, either."



FARMER (who had told the new lad from town to collect the eggs): "Well, my lad, have you found many?"

THE LAD (having chanced on a "sitting" hen): "That I 'ave, sir; one old 'en has laid a dozen eggs, and she's still at it."

SOMETHING SUBSTANTIAL.

MAGISTRATE: "What passed between yourself and the complainant?"

O'BRIEN: "I think, sir, two or three bricks and a lump of paving-stone."

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ALL ACCOUNTED FOR.

"I hope, John," said the parson very gravely, "you don't spend all your earnings?"

"No, sir," responded John respectfully; "I always make it a strict rule never to spend more n two-thirds of me wages, sir."

"Ah, that's good—that's good!" nodded the parson. "And do you put the other third in the bank?"

"Oh, no, sir," responded the man; "I puts it to much better use than that. I gives it to the misses to keep 'ouse on!"

PROMPT MEASURES.

UNCLE (to Tommy, aged seven, playing at war games with another small boy): "If you take the fortress within a quarter-of-an-hour I'll give you sixpence."

TOMMY (a minute later): "I've taken it. Give me the sixpence."

UNCLE (producing the coin): "How did you manage it so quickly?"

TOMMY (ingenuously): "I gave Billy threepence, and he surrendered."

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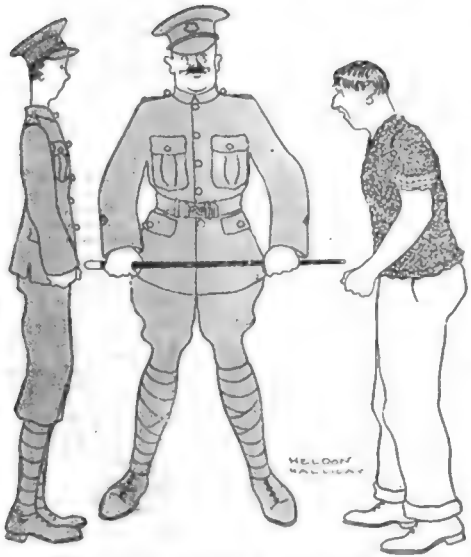
A REST FOR PUSSY.

"Mother, I'm going to have a little sister some day aren't I?"

"Why do you want one?" asked the mother.

"Well, I'm tired of teasing the cat," was the small boy's reply.



***STOREMAN:* "'E don't look strong enough to 'elp in the store."**
***SERGEANT-MAJOR:* "Oh, he'll do to clean the rifles."**
***STOREMAN:* "And who's going to pull 'im through?"**

NOT GUILTY!

The sky was a brilliant blue. So was the sea. The captain's language was tinged to match. There was a light breeze, which made the heart of the sportsman in the brand-new yachting suit rejoice, and did not raise internal qualms. He was flattering himself upon his immaculate attire and the wonderful way in which he was mastering the ropes when in a voice of thunder the captain exclaimed:

"Let go the jib-sheet!"

"I ain't touching the thing," the yachtsman for a day replied defiantly.

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TOO TRUSTFUL.

As a train was getting up steam to leave a certain station, it suddenly parted in the middle. Of course the communication cord broke and one end of it struck the face of an old lady who was standing on the platform.

"Goodness me!" she gasped in astonishment. "What was that?"

"The train has broken in two," said a gentleman who stood near her."

"And I should just think so!" said the old lady indignantly, as she eyed the broken cord. "Did they really think that a piece of string like that could hold a train together?"

A CHURCH WORKER.

After making the usual inquiries respecting the health of the family, the rector asked if the lady or her husband attended church.

"My husband does, very often," was the reply. "I stop at home and look after the children."

"I'm pleased to hear of your husband's attention to church matters," said the reverend gentleman; "but do I understand that he takes an active part in church work?"

"That he do, sir, on an' off—why, he was repairin' the steeple all last week!"

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HIS ONLY CASE.

YOUNG DOCTOR: "Yes, I expect that things will go pretty slow when I commence."

OLD DOCTOR: "Well, you must expect that. Why, when I first showed my brass plate, I sat in my consulting-room for three months and only had one case."

"Phew! That was rough, wasn't it? And what was that case?"

"A case of instruments."

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OUT OF SIGHT.

MOTHER (to youthful artist): "Don't be silly, dear; you haven't drawn any soldiers."

YOUNG ARTIST: "I have, mother—German and English as well."

MOTHER: "But I can't see them."

YOUNG ARTIST: "No, 'cos they're in the trenches."

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A CAUSE FOR REGRET.

WEEKLY: "When I was a boy, you know, the doctor said if I didn't stop smoking cigarettes I should become feeble minded."

PRETTY GIRL: "Well, why didn't you stop?"

A HEAVY ORDER.

***HEARTY OLD GENTLEMAN:* "Ah, waiter! put me on a round of toast, please!"**

A WAITING GAME.

"Johnny, I don't believe you've studied your geography."

"No, mum. I heard papa say the map of the world was changing every day, an' I thought I'd wait a few years till things got settled."

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TIME TO STOP.

"This is the twelfth time I've called about this bill," began the collector.

"I hope you won't call again," said the debtor. "I'm a bit superstitious about number thirteen, and I'm afraid something might happen to one or the other of us."

A MAN OF MANY LIMBS.

A lady was showing a visitor the family portraits in the picture-gallery.

"That officer there in the uniform," she said, "was my great-great-grandfather. He was as brave as a lion, but one of the most unfortunate of men. He never fought a battle in which he did not have an arm or a leg carried away."

Then she added proudly:

"He took part in twenty-four engagements."

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THE SIGNAL OF DISTRESS.

The faculty of estimating a person's seriousness by the sound of his voice or the peculiarity of the words he uses is highly developed in the small boy.

"Bertie, don't you hear your mother calling you?" said his aunt.

"Yes, but she don't want me bad," replied Bertie.

"Yes, she does; she has called you seven times."

"I know; but she hasn't called 'Albert' yet."

• •

Toby, the terrier, finds the blackbird devouring a worm, and joins in his song of thanksgiving. His efforts do not meet with the bird's approval, and are rewarded by vicious pecks instead of the praise he had expected.

COUNT UP!

"I wonder how many men will be made unhappy when I marry?" said the flirt.

"How many do you expect to marry?" answered her dearest friend thoughtfully.

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SURE TO FETCH HIM.

Two commercial travellers who met on one of the upper floors of an hotel, stopped to chat.

"I wonder if Jackson is staying here," said one.

"I don't know," the other answered, "but I can tell you if he is on this floor."

"How?"

"Just take a brush and make a sound like someone sweeping, and if Jackson is within hearing he'll stick his head out to flirt with the chambermaid."

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ONE OF THEM.

TENANT: "You've called for the poor rate, have you? What is the poor rate, may I ask?"

VISITOR: "It's for the benefit of people without means, sir."

TENANT: "Ah, then, you mean you've called *with* it, not *for* it!"

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ANCIENT HISTORY.

A certain naval captain, a few years ago, received a young cadet, on his first joining, with the remark:

"Well, youngster, the old story, I suppose—the fool of the family sent to sea?"

"Oh, no, sir," replied the boy. "That's all been altered since your day."

STARTING AT THE BOTTOM.

"I'm going to have my boy begin at the bottom and work up," said the millionaire.

"I presume you intend to start him as an office boy, then?"

"Exactly."

"Shall I put him on the pay-roll at the regular office boy's salary?"

"No, I wouldn't do that. You'd better start him at about fifty pounds a week. The boy's got to have a little pocket money."

MINT AND SODA.

By C. Randolph Lichfield.

"There is no music more for him.
His lights are out, his feast is done;
His bowl that sparkled at the brim
Is drained, is broken, cannot hold."

The scene was set, the curtain down. In the mysterious depths below the stage a member of the orchestra was tuning his fiddle lovingly with a long, slow bow, and the melancholy harmonics floated out across the almost empty auditorium—very ghosts of music, thrilling in the somewhat foggy air aloof from other sounds—the hushed murmur of voices from darkened pit and gallery, the rustle of unhurried movements and the desultory plop-plop of the tip-up seats being tipped down by smoothly moving programme-girls.

In the long, gloomy passage leading from the stage door to the "back," and known as "Pneumonia Alley" on account of its vicious draughts, Garland stopped his wife, and they paused, alone for the moment.

Something in the atmosphere of the place, well as he knew it, and perhaps a sense of having reached a crisis in his life, brought to the surface all the emotions which had been struggling in him for expression all day long, and longer.

"Marvis," he said, "if I've seemed sharp to you at times—indifferent to you, perhaps neglectful—you must forgive me."

"Yes," she returned.

"I've overworked, you know—I—I've overworked." His hand closed tightly on the sleeve of her fur coat. "I've not thought enough about you or for myself. I know I've seemed neglectful of you—I have been. It's not been fair. But if the play's all right and I have 'found' myself, then everything will be all right, Marvis. I'm just as fond of you as ever I was."

"Thank you," she said, her voice queerly inflected, for she did not quite understand his nervous condition. "The play's all right, and my part shan't fail. But this is a deadly place for a love scene, Brin—especially between husband and wife. Get on."

They went a few slow paces forward, jostled together by the narrowness of the passage. Then he tightened his grip on her arm and stopped her again—not now as the propitiator of the Fates, but as the husband of a lovely girl.

"Marvis," he said, "it hasn't been a too serious matter, has it—my neglect of you?"

"I shall forget it, if you really mean to be sweet in future," she replied rather reluctantly, not wishing too readily to forgive. "But I shan't if you keep me much longer in this draught——"

"I mean," he went on, "I don't like the way Colter looked at you this afternoon."

"Brindley!" she exclaimed, with a sharp intake of breath.

"He's in love with you."

"So he is with every other pretty girl—sooner or later. Take me out of this, and don't be silly! He's a charming fellow—but I'm a respectable married woman. Don't be foolish, Brin. Now you've come to your senses you're trying to make your own flesh creep. You're entitled to a month's notice before I leave you."

She shook off his hand and took his arm, leaning against him in happy fondness, pleased as ever woman is to find her lover jealous.

"To-night's the night," she said softly. "I'm going to shine in your play, and your play's going to shine around me, and afterwards you're not going to work and worry so much, upsetting your nerves and digestion. To-night's *our* night. Buck up!"

Garland laughed in a nervously gay way, and pushed open the swing door.

"You're a brick, Marvis," he rejoined feelingly, "a real, real brick."

At the same time Guthrie Colter, whom they had dropped in the front of the theatre, sat on a divan in the *foyer* biting on the amber cigarette-holder from which he had blown the fag-end of a cigarette—sat biting the amber to suppress his secret excitement, and considering in a hurried, agitated way whether he could do it—dare attempt it.

The ever-hot blood in him ran riot with the rank poison of madness. Marvis possessed him, and he burnt with a sense of failure and

exasperation. During the long weeks he had made so little impression upon her that even in the darkness of the car, where he sat close to her side, she could draw her hand from his because of the man who sat at her other side—the abstracted and indifferent oaf, the sallow-faced, nervous dyspeptic. It was gall upon the raw to him—the more so because Marvis had never seemed so lovely and desirable as to-day, so personally his. Of all girls she was the loveliest and most desirable, not a little for the reason that he could not allure her beyond the narrow line where friendly intimacy becomes familiarity.

He did not doubt she cared for him. Yet she held him at arm's length, her fingers scarcely touching him, because of Garland—Garland with his dull, abstracted air, his toneless voice, his studied diet, and mint and soda pellets after meals!

True, Garland had not always been so pitiable a doit; his health was wrong, of course, through overwork. Still, he was the man whom Marvis had had regard to all the past weeks, the melancholy shadow in the background of her thoughts, though never had Colter been at so much pains to disperse such shadows by his own bright light as in her case.

But there it was. She who would embrace a strange man on the public stage would not touch hands with him in the darkness of the motor-car. Even were Marvis as necessary as food and air to him, there was no Marvis for him while Garland held her by the slightest bonds of matrimony. She was that sort.

But if he did this thing, which natural circumstances had suggested to his mind, all would be different.

Not to-night, of course, but to-morrow—some time after breakfast, probably—Garland would stumble, fall into a heap, not himself guessing in the intense amazement of the moment. Nor would Marvis guess—ever guess. Poisoned!—yes, manifestly poisoned, but how—how, and for what reason? What would she think? What would she say if she were asked whether she could suggest how he had taken it?

Of course, she could make no suggestion. Garland had eaten of the same dish as she, drunk the same brew of coffee, and afterwards—taken two mint and soda pellets, simple mint and soda pellets such as he had taken after every meal for weeks on end—the last two in the phial he always carried in his pocket. He had taken two of the same after supper the night before. There had, then, been six in the phial; he took two, and, by way of a joke, Mr. Colter took two, leaving the two she saw her husband shake out of the little phial and swallow after breakfast.

It might seem there was some mysterious connection between those after-breakfast pellets and his sudden seizure, but there was the empty phial bearing the name of a manufacturing chemist known in all parts of the world. A mystery, yes—a complete, insoluble, perhaps a painful mystery for a time, but no suspicion—and Marvis—radiant, fascinating, tantalising!

Excitement broke loose in Colter and lifted him suddenly to his feet. But with an effort he controlled himself, and hurrying out into the foggy street, he hailed a taxicab to bear him swiftly to his chambers.

Where were they hidden, those vital pellets? Could he remember and find them quickly? . . . Of course!—he could put his hand upon them in a moment.

In half-an-hour he was back in the theatre again.

He made straight for Garland's box, an explanation of his disappearance ready on his tongue, a skilfully-framed invitation to supper somewhere pressing on the back of his mind. But Garland was not there.

"I expect he's round the back," said Colter to the attendant.

"I'll inquire, sir," the man rejoined. "Mr. Newbury——"

"No, no," Colter demurred, eager to be alone awhile to compose himself and reconsider all the details of his scheme. And more than that, indeed, he wished he might never see Garland again. "He'll come round presently, no doubt."

Unconsciously Colter smiled; mechanically he hung up his hat and stripped off his coat. But as he went forward the glow of the footlights struck upon his face, and he wavered for an instant, feeling discovered in his guilty thoughts; then, as the notion left him, he drew a chair and sat down.

Marvis held the stage with a big, squarely-built man of American type, whom Colter did not recognise—nor try to; only Marvis interested him, and as he watched her and listened to her voice rather than to her words, she held him in a tightening spell and whipped his passion for her to a fury. The play was nothing, the occasion was forgotten—nothing but Marvis was anything, for she was all things he desired.

The two white pellets which nestled in a corner of the right-hand pocket of his waistcoat seemed innocent and futile things; the sword, fire, and pestilence were more appropriate to his desire to sweep his way to her.

Suddenly she was gone, and the hot moisture on his brow cooled as suddenly. With an unsteady hand he drew forth his handkerchief and wiped the cloud away.

["MINT AND SODA" continued overleaf.]

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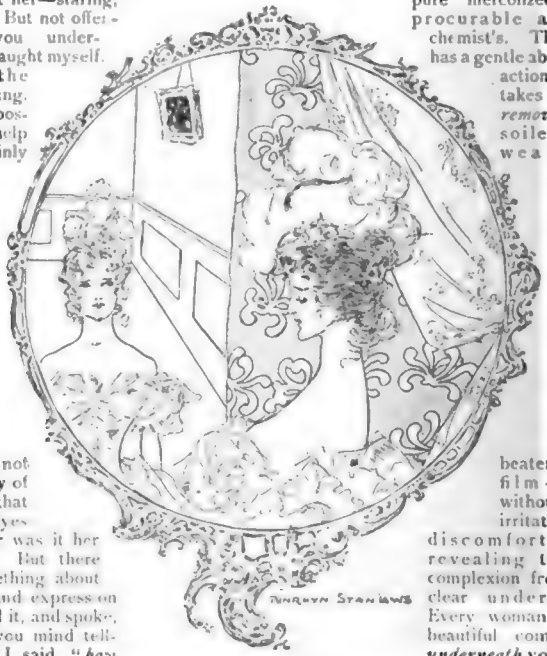
By MILLICENT BROWN

ILLUSTRATED BY PENRHYN STANLAWS

I NOTICED a curious thing recently in a railway train. A nicely dressed woman entered and took a seat beside me. I saw that everyone was looking at her—staring, in fact. But not offensively, you understand. I caught myself doing the same thing. It was impossible to help it. Certainly it was not her beauty of feature that held the eyes of all, nor was it her costume. But there was something about her face and expression—I risked it, and spoke. "Would you mind telling me," I said, "*how* you keep your complexion so dazzlingly pure? You won't think me impertinent, but you seem to be over thirty, aren't you? And yet you haven't a line in your face, and your cheeks are quite peach-like. Do tell me how you do it." She laughed, quite good naturedly. "Oh, that's very easy," she said! "I remove my skin." "You *what?*" I exclaimed, horrified. Again she laughed, and replied: "Sounds shocking, doesn't it? But I will explain. Instead of using face creams, I use only pure mercolized wax, procurable at any chemist's. The wax has a gentle absorbent action which takes up and *removes* the soiled and weather-beaten outer film-skin, without pain, irritation, or discomfort, thus revealing the real complexion fresh and clear underneath. Every woman has a beautiful comp'exion *underneath*, you know.



"Then, to keep my face firm and free from wrinkles, I merely indulge in a sparkling face bath two or three times a week, which I prepare by dissolving a little stymol, obtained at the chemist's, in a bowl of warm water. This also keeps away those unpleasant little blackheads and prevents 'shine.'"

[ADVT.].

As he did so, turning his head slightly against the motion of his hand, he saw seated beside him, a little farther back, arm's reach away, a still and sombre figure—Garland himself, silent and still, seemingly lost in an emotionless abstraction.

Colter rose unsteadily to his feet and put his chair aside before he could control himself. A little more and he had been at Garland's throat. But he checked himself in time, and Garland, looking up at him so that the light exaggerated his faint, dry smile, raised a limp-wristed hand and shook it above his head expressively.

"How's that?" asked the happy author.

"Heavens!" exclaimed Colter in a thick, scarcely audible voice, and braced himself to dissemble. "She *can* act!"

"I always knew she could," returned Garland loftily. "And now she has a part written for her. To-night—if nothing goes amiss—I've made her and she's made me."

Just then the curtain fell, and in all parts of the house a storm of applause broke out.

"That's for Marvis," said Garland. "Too early to applaud the play. And she deserves it! I wish I could give her a hand, but, as author, I can't very well. But—she'll take the call. Here she comes. My word, isn't she—— `Oh, hang it, I must clap her!"

He was up on his feet with his hands extended to applaud when Colter seized his wrist

"You can't!" he expostulated savagely.

Garland caught his wife's eyes at that moment—she was looking straight across at him as she stood, holding a pleat in the curtain and bowing, and he laughed happily and blew her a kiss. Then he wheeled round in his chair.

"I'm going behind to kiss her properly," he declared. "Coming?"

"No," said Colter curtly; "no, not now."

But Garland had already gone.

Colter closed the door, and thrusting his right finger and thumb into his waistcoat pocket felt down to the corner for the two deadly little pellets nestling there. He took them out and placed them in his open palm, two small white pellets that might be mint and soda for all that one who did not know could tell.

All at once it struck him that Garland had gone where somebody might ask him and his wife to supper—Newbury, the manager, for instance—a quite usual thing. And then? The opportunity would be gone—perhaps for ever; never again might he know when Garland had but six pellets remaining in his phial.

Alarm had hold of him as he hurried out of the box.

"How do I get round to the back?" he asked of an attendant. "I'm a friend of Mr. Garland's, the author, you know."

"I can only send your card to Mr. Newbury, sir," murmured the girl.

"And meanwhile——" began Colter, but stopped himself in time. Controlling his excitement, he tendered his card.

The perspiration stood upon his face when he stepped down into the box again, and his throat was chokingly full.

He sat in the gloomiest corner of the box, which was all too brightly lit for his mood now the lights in the house were up, and resting his arms on his knees he played nervously with his hands, looking up eagerly whenever footsteps approached the door.

All of a sudden, at the sound of Garland's voice, he was on his feet and throwing wide the door.

Garland was accompanied by a big, laughing man, who had a visiting-card in his hand.

"Ah, this is Mr. Guthrie Colter—Mr. Newbury," said Garland promptly. "We met your messenger, Colter."

"Yes," said Colter, returning the manager's bow. "I wanted to come and secure you and your wife for a little celebration supper after the show, Garland, but they wouldn't let me pass."

"'Fraid you're too late," smiled Garland. "We've just fixed up with Mr. Newbury."

"Sorry to have anticipated you," said the manager, laughing at Colter's obvious chagrin, "but it is a pleasure I can't surrender. However, if you will join us I shall be delighted."

Colter fell back a pace, taking a moment to seize greater control over himself, and when the two men had entered the box he pushed the door to.

"Very kind of you," he said, swiftly concluding that the manager's presence at the supper could not affect his plan. "I'm sorry I can't be host, but I shall be delighted to be your guest."

When, after a few minutes, Mr. Newbury hurried away, Colter, stiffening in every muscle at being alone with Garland, thrust a finger and thumb into his waistcoat pocket and felt the pellets in a corner.

"I hope you congratulated her for me," he said.

"I hadn't a chance," returned Garland, who seemed disinclined to talk and very nervous still. "She had to change for this second act, and bundled me out."

Colter laughed. He could afford to laugh with those pellets in his pocket, and the idea

of Garland being "bundled out" amused and delighted him.

"It'll be—well, rather more interesting than usual for you to look through the papers at breakfast to-morrow," he observed, relishing his vicious thoughts.

Garland made a wry face and shook his head dubiously.

"Not out of the wood yet," he demurred. "May fall at the last jump. I've never been lucky, and I'm not over sanguine."

"This must be your lucky night," said Colter.

He reminded Garland he had said that as they followed Marvis and Mr. Newbury down the main aisle of Donnaletti's to the reserved table farthest from the orchestra dais.

"It was prophetic," he averred.

"Prophesy how long the play'll run," returned Garland lightly, and hurried to catch the wrap which was slipping from his wife's shoulder.

Colter perceived the readiness of the attention and saw Garland's hand touch the beautiful bare arm, and he paused to shape a reply which should give some expression to his biting bitterness.

"Till you no longer want it to run," he answered. "You'll never write anything better."

Then he laughed in self-mockery to think he could be provoked by so trifling an incident. He was little more than a ghost who had caught the wrap and touched the bare arm.

They were a very merry party amid many merry parties, and Garland, a good deal overstrung, was almost the merriest of them all. He ate sparingly, but of most things, and Colter noticed this with some alarm, lest Garland, considering his unwisdom, should take an extra mint and soda pellet afterwards.

To glance at Marvis, and to think of such a baffling mischance at the last! Marvis, so radiant, never so bewitching!

Every now and then an icy thrill ran through his fevered blood, and made him long to see the pellets in his pocket pass to Garland's lips, for Garland was awake, a changed man; no lethargic, sallow dolt, he had now shed his abstraction and his blindness. Ill he was still, undoubtedly, but vitality was stirring in him with a healthy hue, and his eyes were opened to the joyousness of life.

"No," said Garland presently, when sweets were offered him, "I mustn't take sweets."

"He has his own special sweets in his pocket, Mr. Newbury," observed Marvis jokingly. "And don't you forget them, Brin."

A sort of moral terror seized Colter, and for the moment he could not think where to look, what to say, how to control his hands. It seemed to have come so suddenly. Garland was feeling in his waistcoat pocket for the little phial, while he chatted lightly, and Marvis was laughing—Newbury, too; they were all three laughing.

Colter leant back in his chair and laughed. He was watching them all, thinking of everything. Possibilities of failure and a thousand questions crowded his mind bewilderingly.

Marvis was speaking to him in a laughing aside. He felt he could have crushed her in his hands, but he could not think what she said nor what to respond. So he laughed again—he did not know how mirthlessly, and shot a glance at Garland, who was covertly below the level of the table, shaking pellets from the phial into his hand.

"What are they—pepsine?" asked Newbury curiously.

"Mint and soda," answered Garland.

Colter braced himself and was ready. He tilted back his chair, and thrust the finger and thumb of each hand in a waistcoat pocket.

"Perhaps we'd better all take some," Newbury suggested, a twinkle in his eyes. "Will you indulge, Miss Winter?"

Colter caught a breath with sharp apprehension. Supposing——"

"Thank you—no," Marvis declined.

"In the cause of science," Newbury urged.

"There's only enough for two of you," observed Garland.

"What do they taste like?" Colter hurriedly inquired.

"They don't taste at all," Garland returned, and slipping two pellets into his mouth, swallowed them with a sip of wine. "Gone before you know it."

Just for a moment Colter hesitated, mortally afraid that either Newbury or Marvis might follow his example; but as though to save him, Marvis turned to Newbury and engaged his attention with a sudden earnestness.

Colter held out his hand to Garland.

"Let's have a couple," he asked.

"Perfectly harmless," said Garland, and laid the phial in his hand. "Leave me a couple for the morning—too late to get more to-night."

All sense of danger left Colter when Garland said that. He was uplifted by a feeling of relief and the certainty of success. His heart hammered and his pulses raced.

Like Garland, covertly, below the level of the table, he unscrewed the metal cap of the phial and emptied the four pellets into his palm. Then there were six—so alike, and yet——

["MINT AND SODA," continued overleaf.]

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"Are you going to have some?" exclaimed Marvis, turning to him with a laugh.

He lifted his eyes to hers, the finest, the most wonderful eyes in the world, and involuntarily he clenched his hands. His face grew tensely eager, and he nodded.

Just for an instant she seemed abashed, and drew away slightly; then composing herself, she turned to Newbury and Garland, and tapped upon the table.

"Gentlemen," she announced, and indicated Colter by a gesture, "in the cause of science our friend will now proceed to swallow two mint and soda tablets."

Colter was still sufficiently master of himself to smile. But his flesh was creeping. The six pellets were heaped together on his palm, and if he had not known that two of them were different from the others he would hardly have suspected it. Luckily he knew.

"He doesn't really swallow them," Newbury observed humorously. "I've seen it done before."

With a stifled laugh in a high, excited key, Colter popped the pellets into his mouth, and catching up his glass, swallowed them with a draught of wine.

"Presto!" said Garland.

Then Colter's face changed. It went suddenly blank and grey. He rose to his feet, staring at the empty phial and the four mint and soda pellets in his open hand—staring incredulously, staring in terror, desperately trying to disbelieve that he had swallowed the two pellets he had picked out to put into the phial.

"Oh, don't!" protested Marvis, laughing timidly. "You look too dreadful, Mr. Colter. What will people think?"

Colter's legs sagged suddenly, and he dropped his hands to the table to save himself from sinking. Livid to the lips, his wide eyes gloomed with horror; he braced himself and turned away, leaving the phial and four pellets lying on the table.

"He hasn't taken them at all," said Garland sharply. "Come, come, Colter—don't carry the joke too far! You're attracting attention."

With dragging feet, gripping his throat with his left hand, Colter went to the table behind Marvis, and to the amazement of the two women and the man seated there, collapsed, his legs giving way under him, though he tried to save himself by grasping the edge of the table and the back of one woman's chair.

A dozen people sprang to their feet. Newbury and Garland were the first. White to the lips with angry amazement, they seized him by the arms and raised him up.

"What's the matter with him?" a frightened woman at the table gasped.

"Nothing," barked Garland indignantly. "He's behaving like a cad."

"Get him outside," growled Newbury.

"He's *ill!*" exclaimed Marvis. "Oh, dear!"

As though to deny it, Colter stiffened, and with surprising vigour threw Garland and Newbury from him.

Never a word said he; not a sound but of laboured breathing escaped him. Swinging into the main aisle he went staggering towards the door, fetching people to their feet by tottering towards them.

Gravely and deeply ashamed, Garland and Newbury watched him, till somebody swung the doors open for him, and they saw him pitch out heavily on to the pavement. Then they rushed after him.

Marvis stood as if spellbound, her hands tightly clasped before her, and stared at the four simple mint and soda pellets lying on the table.

"What is the matter with him?" asked a woman's breathless voice over her shoulder.

Marvis broke her hands apart and pressed them to her cheeks as she turned about.

"I—I'm not sure," she panted. "I—I have a suspicion, though—he's poisoned!"

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"Tommy's" leisure is often of the spasmodic order, and that's why short stories and brief, breezy articles are the very thing for him. He will fight twice as well if he is in good spirits, so—well, it's up to you, isn't it?

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MR. EDITOR —HIS PAGE.

Summer-time Sentiments.

YOU AND YOUR "ROYAL."

PROBABLY there never was a June less June-like than this one in which we speed to press the August Number. Its sparkling pages have been mobilised as it were by the fireside. You will read them—the more fortunate of you—while you bask in the sun on the beach or court sunstroke on a sea-washed cliff. Others, our brave fighting men, will enjoy them in the doubtful sanctuary of trench or dug-out, or amid the lurking dangers of the North Sea, while those still training in England will sandwich their delights between the mysteries of "forming fours" and digging trenches. For the ROYAL penetrates everywhere, and is beloved of the cheerful "Tommy" and the stern, unbending C.O. alike.

So good luck to you all, and if the ROYAL gladdens your hearts as I hope it will, I shall feel I have not lived in vain.

A word to holiday-makers. Take care of your ROYAL. Don't drop it in pools, or tear out its immortal pages to use as paper serviettes at picnics. Cherish it, and when you have done with it send it to your own particular soldier, or hand it over the post-office counter according to instructions on page 395. The troops love the ROYAL; it keeps them from "getting fusty," as one appreciative warrior put it. So that's quite enough, isn't it? Off goes your copy the very moment you've finished with it!

THE FRESH AIR FUND.

Yes, the shillings have been coming in splendidly, a silver harvest of them. But we want still more if lots of poor kiddies are not to be left out. Each shilling sends a child into the country for a day. Won't you respond to the appeal on page 363, in which Miss Gladys Cooper pleads the cause of the children?

I acknowledge with many thanks from Miss Gladys Cooper and myself, the following amounts:

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SILKEN SECRETS.

Mary, the lady who meandered so charmingly through the pages of the ROYAL recently, is no more, but her creator is very much alive, thank you. He has written a new series entitled "Silken Secrets," the first story of which appears in the August issue of the NOVEL MAGAZINE.

In the same special Summer Number you will find the first instalment of an excellent serial by Miss Beatrice Grimshaw, entitled "Nobody's Island." Need I say more, except to remind you that the August NOVEL is now on sale at any bookstall, price 4½d. net?

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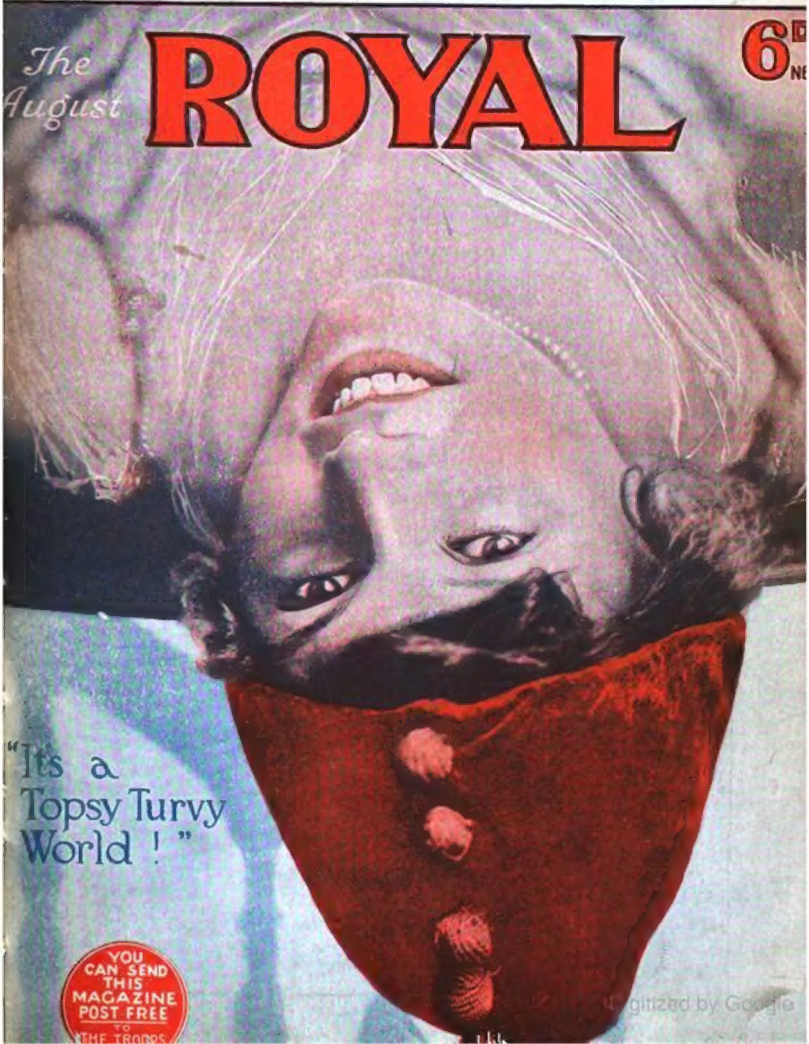

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NEXT TO A GOOD 'SCRAP' THERE IS NOTHING TOMMY ENJOYS SO MUCH AS A GOOD WASH WITH

WRIGHT'S COAL TAR SOAP

(The Soldiers' Soap)

4d. Per Tablet.

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